



CIRCUMCISION OF THE PENIS

Circumcision is the procedure where a small amount of skin (foreskin) which covers the end of the penis is removed. The operation takes about twenty to thirty minutes, and usually does not delay going home from the hospital or office. Circumcision is an optional operation for your son. There are no medical reasons to perform circumcision. You should know that some insurances do not pay for circumcision.

Care of the Uncircumcised Penis:

If you decide not to have your baby circumcised, it is still easy to care for it. It should be washed like any other part of the baby when it gets dirty. It is not necessary to pull back the foreskin forcibly. With most boys, the entire glans, or end of the penis, cannot be seen until between five and eight years of age. As your child gets older, it will be possible to gently pull back the foreskin farther and farther when cleaning. Do not be alarmed if there is a small amount of white material (smegma) under the foreskin. Recent large studies report less masturbation in boys not circumcised

Reasons Why Some Parents Want Circumcision:

- **Ritual and religion:** Ritual and religious circumcision has been done for centuries. Jews, Muslims, and some Christians continue to practice ritual circumcision.
- **Resembling father or other boys:** Many parents want the child not to feel different. Slightly more than half of all boys in the United States are circumcised. However, worldwide most boys are not circumcised.
- **Easier now than later:** An occasional child or adult needs a circumcision in later life. It may be easier in the newborn period, both mechanically and emotionally.
- **Cleanliness:** The circumcised penis is somewhat easier to clean, though it is also easy to clean the uncircumcised penis without pain. Plain water without soap is sufficient for cleansing.
- **Urinary tract infections:** A study reported that uncircumcised boys have more frequent infections of the kidneys and bladder than those who are circumcised. More recent studies have not supported this finding.

How Circumcision Is Done:

First your child is given a sugar water solution to encourage sucking on a pacifier during the procedure to decrease pain. Then a small amount of local anesthetic is injected, similar to the medication a dentist uses to fill a tooth, into the penis. After this takes effect the skin (foreskin) covering the glans penis (tip of the penis) is removed by first making a slit in the foreskin, then applying a metal bell-like clamp, removing the excess skin, and finally removing the metal bell-like object after a few minutes. Gel-foam is applied in order to avoid bleeding (this may come off within 24 hours or remain for several days) followed by petroleum jelly.

Risks of Circumcision:

A complication occurs in about one in every three hundred circumcisions. The main complications are:

- **Bleeding** - a bandage with special medicine to stop bleeding may have to be applied; rarely we have to put in a stitch.
- **Infection** - usually happens after you go home. Watch for swelling or redness of the shaft of the penis (it is normal for the end to be red after the circumcision) or for more than a little pus (a little yellow material on the tip of the penis is normal). Call us right away if you think infection is present.
- **Bruises**- from injection of the local anesthetic resolve within 2 or 3 days - very common
- **Allergic reaction** to the local anesthetic - is possible but very rare.

- Incision is ragged and needs to be revised later on (after one year of age usually).
- Adhesions (skin stuck to mucus membrane) sometimes form which are easily released during a well child visit.

Care of the Circumcised Penis:

1. Slight swelling of the skin of the penis is common. Expect a small amount of reddish-brown discharge around the penis and on the diaper. If gelfoam was wrapped around the penis, it will loosen and should be removed gently when changing a wet diaper. If there is more than a little bleeding, call us.
2. Clean the circumcised penis gently, using water and a washcloth when necessary. Do not use alcohol!
3. Place a small amount of petroleum jelly on the penis tip for a day or so so that it won't stick to the diaper.