

Newborn Circumcision Information

Date: _____

Weight: _____

Height: _____



This handout answers some of the common questions parents have about circumcision. Read this over and watch the “Newborn Circumcision” video to help you make a decision (see Other Resources). If you need more information, talk with your doctor or health care professional.

Risks of circumcision

The risks of the circumcision procedure include:

- Infection
- Bleeding
- Pain
- Injury to penis

However, these risks are small. The complication rate is less than 2 percent. Serious complications are very rare (one in 500 circumcised newborns).

The effect of circumcision on men’s sexual activity and enjoyment later in life is not fully known. Some studies have reported equal sensation between circumcised men and uncircumcised men and no decrease in sexual functioning with circumcision.

Benefits of circumcision

The long-term benefits of circumcision include:

- Lower risk of cancer of the penis.
- Lower risk of bladder or kidney (urinary tract) infection.
- May help prevent sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV.

However, these long-term benefits are small:

- Cancer of the penis is very rare (only one in 100,000 men). This risk can also be reduced with regular cleaning of the penis. The American Cancer Society does not recommend circumcision for protection against penile cancer.
- Urinary infections are also uncommon; only 1 percent of uncircumcised boys get a bladder or kidney (urinary tract) infection.

Other things to think about

The decision to circumcise your baby is a personal choice. Some parents talk about whether their son will look like his father or like other boys in the locker room. The latest statistics show that just over half of baby boys in the United States are circumcised.

The American Academy of Pediatrics does not recommend circumcision as a routine procedure for newborn males. You may want to talk with your partner, family, or friends to help you decide. Consider your cultural and/or religious values. If possible, make your decision before your baby is born. Making a decision about circumcision is more difficult after delivery, when you may be very tired.

If you decide to circumcise your baby, having the procedure done when he is still a newborn is best. Circumcising your baby after the newborn period has more risks, because general

What is circumcision?

Circumcision is the removal of the foreskin that covers the tip of the penis. After circumcision, the tip of the penis is always uncovered.



How should I decide if my child should be circumcised?

For many new parents, whether or not to circumcise their baby is a hard decision.

anesthesia is needed. Five to 10 percent of boys are circumcised after the newborn period. The most common reasons for having a circumcision later on are:

- Parents change their minds; or
- The baby has problems related to his foreskin.

How is circumcision done?

Infants must be stable and healthy to be circumcised in the hospital. The procedure is usually done on the day you will go home. If delayed due to infant health problems or parental indecision, the procedure may be done in the clinic. There are several methods of circumcision.

The three most common methods are the Plastibell, Gomco, and Mogen methods. Ask your doctor or health care professional which method your facility uses.

A shot of pain medicine or an anesthetic cream is used on the base of your baby's penis for pain relief. A sucrose pacifier may also be given to your baby for pain relief. Your baby may have some mild pain during and after surgery. The pain after surgery usually does not last more than a day.

The Plastibell Method

- A plastic ring is tied around the end of the penis.
- The foreskin is removed.
- The plastic ring stays on the end of the penis and prevents bleeding after the surgery.



This information is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of medical advice or care you receive from your child's physician or other health care professional. If your child has persistent health problems, or if you have additional questions, please consult with your child's doctor. If you have questions or need additional information about your child's medication, please speak to your pharmacist.

The Gomco and Mogen Methods

The foreskin is removed from the penis using the Gomco or Mogen devices. These methods do not use a plastic ring.



The Gomco and Mogen Methods use devices that look like this one.

Care of the circumcised penis

For the Plastibell Method:

- Petroleum jelly can be put on the Plastibell ring after cleaning.
- The ring should fall off 4 to 10 days after the circumcision. Do not pull the Plastibell ring off, because this can cause bleeding.
- Clean your baby's penis by gently washing with water 3 times a day or during diaper changes.

For the Gomco or Mogen Methods:

- Take off the gauze and petroleum dressing 48 hours after the circumcision.
- Clean your baby's penis by gently washing with water 3 times a day or during diaper changes.

Care of the uncircumcised penis

If you decide not to circumcise your baby, taking care of his penis is easy.

You do not need to retract (pull back) the foreskin to clean it for the first year of life. After 1 to 2 years of age, you can retract the foreskin partially for cleaning. Never force the foreskin back, just gently pull it back and clean with soap and water. When your child is 5 or 6 years old, teach him to do this himself when he takes a shower.

Many times the foreskin cannot be fully retracted until your child is a teenager; this is not a reason to worry.

When to call for advice

Call your health care professional if you notice your baby has any of the following after circumcision:

- Urine dripping out of his penis.
- More than a few drops of blood on the penis.
- Redness, pain, and swelling around or on the penis after the first couple of days.
- A fever (more than 100.4°F rectal).
- The Plastibell ring has not fallen off by 14 days after the surgery.

Other Resources

- Connect to our Web site at **kp.org**, under the Health and Wellness tab, click on Live healthy then choose Pregnancy and new baby.
- If you are a member in Northern California, to watch a video about circumcision visit your doctor's home page at **kp.org/mydoctor** or refer to your Healthy Beginnings Pregnancy Online Newsletter.
- Contact your local Kaiser Permanente Health Education Center or Department for health information, programs, and other resources.
- Look at the American Academy of Pediatrics website at **aap.org**.

Please share

this handout with anyone who takes care of your child.



Before your baby is born, try to decide about circumcision.



For more information, consult with you doctor or other health care professional.