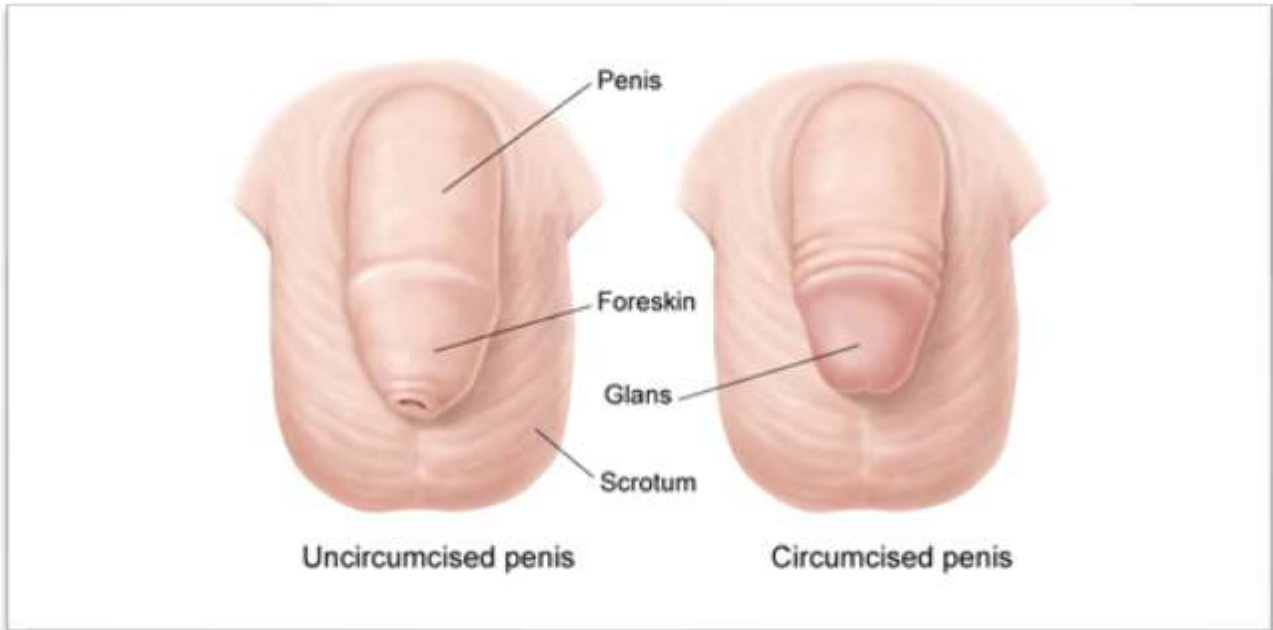


Circumcision Counselling

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Overview

What is circumcision?

Circumcision is a surgical procedure to remove the foreskin, a fold of skin covering the end of the penis. The foreskin is a double-layered fold of skin and mucous membranes that protects the head (glans) of the penis from dryness and irritation that may be caused by contact with urine, feces, and clothing. **Circumcision is optional.** Some parents choose to have it done and some don't.

Families may choose circumcision based on **religious or cultural tradition**, in response to concerns about health and hygiene, or simply because they want their son's penis to look like his dad's or other family members'.

What are the health benefits of circumcision?

Circumcision may reduce the risk of urinary tract infections as well as cancer of the penis and some sexually transmitted infections. The AAP estimates that about 1 in 100 uncircumcised boys develops a urinary tract infection during his first year, while the risk is closer to 1 in 1,000 for circumcised boys.

Also, according to the CDC:



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Circumcision may **reduce the risk of cancer of the penis** by as much as 30 percent. But this cancer is already rare, and the risk is further reduced for males who get the HPV vaccine (now recommended for boys at age 11 or 12).

Circumcision can **reduce a man's risk of acquiring HIV during sex** with an infected female partner by 50 to 60 percent. However, circumcision has not been shown to reduce the risk of male-to-male or male-to-female HIV transmission, which are much more common ways to become infected.

Circumcised men are **30 to 45 percent less likely to get genital herpes** than uncircumcised men.

Rates of certain sexually transmitted infections, such as bacterial vaginosis, trichomoniasis, and human papillomavirus (HPV), are lower in female partners of circumcised men.

What are the risks of circumcision?

Minor bleeding and swelling are the most common complications. Other less common problems include:

Adhesions, which can happen when residual foreskin sticks to the healing glans. This condition usually goes away on its own or with ointment.

A trapped penis, meaning the penis is encircled by a ring of scar tissue. If not treated, this condition can make it difficult to urinate and cause problems with hygiene and sexual function. A trapped penis is usually treated with steroid cream or surgery. Infection, which is likely to be mild and treatable with antibiotics. Severe complications are rare but can include: Bleeding that doesn't stop with local pressure. This may require stitches. As with any surgery, there's a small risk of sepsis, a dangerous blood infection. Injury, such as the partial amputation of the head of the penis or the removal of too much skin. This might affect both the appearance and function of the penis. Improper healing, which might lead to scarring or a shortening of the penis. This complication would cause an odd bend or shape of the penis or lead to discomfort when having an erection. The rate of complications from circumcision procedures is less than 0.5 percent. The rate increases greatly (from 10- to 20-fold) for boys who are circumcised at a later age.

It's also possible for too much foreskin to be left behind, and you may not be happy with how the penis looks after the procedure. In that case, you'd need to need wait until your baby is at least 6 months old to have an additional procedure done (under general anesthesia) to remove the remaining foreskin.

What happens after my baby is circumcised?

After your baby has been circumcised, he may have some pain and swelling. Every time you change your diaper, apply Vaseline jelly on the penis head to prevent scarring for the first week after the procedure. The most important thing is to keep your baby's penis as clean as possible while it's healing.