

GENESIS OB/GYN

CIRCUMCISION

If you have a boy, you need to decide whether or not to have him circumcised. Circumcision is the surgical removal of the foreskin from the end of the penis.

To help you make an informed decision, here are some factors to consider:

- The American Academy of Pediatrics, the organization that represents most of the pediatricians in the United States, stated in 1989 that "Newborn circumcision has potential medical benefits, as well as disadvantages and risks."
- There is NO conclusive evidence that circumcision prevents cancer, venereal disease, masturbation or poor hygiene.
- Although the overall risk is low, there may be an increased incidence of urinary tract infection in uncircumcised male children.
- Both circumcised and uncircumcised males enjoy normal sex lives.
- Differences in appearance are minimal. Concerns that your child might raise can be handled by frank, open discussion.
- As with any surgical procedure, there are some risks, including excessive bleeding, infection, and too much or too little skin removed.
- A few boys who are not circumcised at birth may need the procedure later in life. In the United States about 3 out of every 1,000 uncircumcised babies need the procedure after the newborn period.
- Opinions differ regarding the degree of pain the baby feels. However, babies loudly protest their distress for about one minute during the surgical procedure. Most circumcisions are done with a local anesthetic.
- Check your insurance coverage or financial plan. Many programs will not cover circumcisions.

CARE OF THE CIRCUMCISED PENIS

After the circumcision, there will be a Vaseline dressing around the end of the baby's penis. Your nurse will show you how to change this. You will need to wash the area gently if it becomes soiled by a bowel movement.

If you do have your son circumcised, be sure to keep the skin on the penis pushed down below the glans (tip) and keep Vaseline applied until healing is complete. If not cared for properly, the remaining skin can scar over the glans and the circumcision will need to be redone when the child is older.

As the penis heals, the tip may have a white and/or yellow-colored, soft crusting. This is normal and is part of the healing process. Within 10 days this crust will be replaced with healthy skin.

Report to your doctor any of the following signs:

- Any bleeding more than the size of a dime.
- If your baby does not urinate in a 24 hour period.
- Any swelling or bad odor from the circumcision area.
- Any puss-like discharge.

CARE OF THE UNCIRCUMCISED PENIS

Gently wash away any secretions around the end of the baby's penis as you clean the rest of the baby's bottom after bowel movements, between diaper changes, and at bath time.

DO NOT RETRACT (push back) THE FORESKIN TO CLEAN UNDER IT. The foreskin is attached to the delicate glans of the penis. Pushing the foreskin back for cleaning is not necessary and may harm your baby.

Total separation of the foreskin from the glans may take several years and will happen without assistance. As your baby grows, he will learn to care for his own personal hygiene.