

HOW IS CIRCUMCISION PERFORMED?

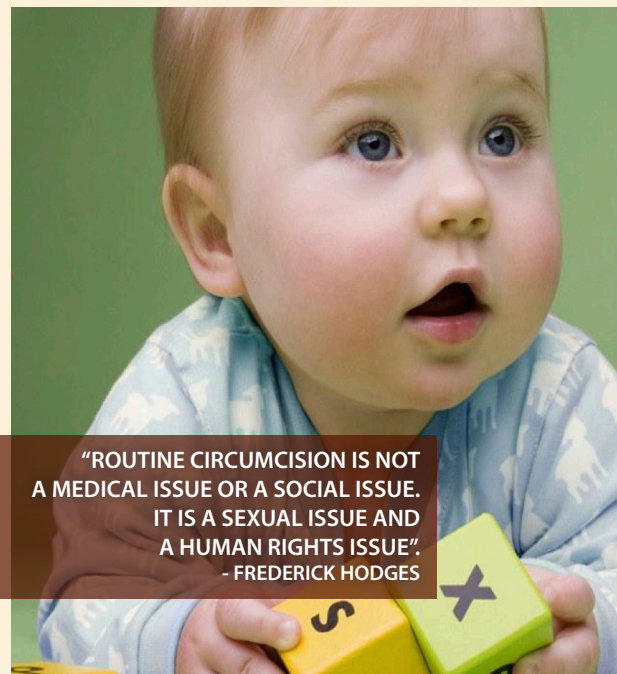
The baby is placed spread out on his back upon a board called a circumstraint. His arms and legs are strapped down to this board so that he can't move. His genitals are scrubbed and covered with antiseptic. The foreskin is torn from his glans, crushed and cut off with (and sometimes without) the use of a special circumcision device. Most parents who see what is done to a baby when he is circumcised and how he reacts, decide against circumcision.

See the surgery for yourself:

- tinyurl.com/6ftzovc
- tinyurl.com/3qepl86

HOW DO YOU CLEAN AN INTACT PENIS?

Cleaning the intact (non-circumcised) penis is extremely easy. Wash only the outside, just as you would wash a finger. Having the child sit in a bath is enough to clean his penis. Never try to pull back (retract) his foreskin and clean underneath. Children are born unable to retract their foreskin. Forced retraction causes pain, and possibly infection. During adolescence, the child will develop the ability to retract his foreskin. When this occurs, cleaning is the same except he should rinse underneath his foreskin with water.



**"ROUTINE CIRCUMCISION IS NOT
A MEDICAL ISSUE OR A SOCIAL ISSUE.
IT IS A SEXUAL ISSUE AND
A HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE".
- FREDERICK HODGES**

RELIGIOUS CIRCUMCISION

Circumcision is often practiced in Islam and Judaism. However, religious circumcision is increasingly being seen as a violation of the child's religious and personal freedom.

In Islam, circumcision is not required. It is not even mentioned in the Qur'an. Many Muslim parents are now deciding not to have their sons circumcised.

In Judaism, circumcision is typically performed on the 8th day after birth. However, many Jews, especially those who identify as cultural or Reform Jews, are no longer having their sons circumcised. Some of these parents are welcoming their sons with a ceremony called Bris Shalom, which does not involve genital cutting.

In the Christian faith, circumcision is not practiced, and is often regarded as being against the religion.

Religious References

<http://tinyurl.com/MUSLIM-CIRC>
JewsAgainstCircumcision.org
BeyondTheBris.com
CatholicsAgainstCircumcision.org

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

- CIRP.org
- NOCIRC.org
- NORM.org
- CircumcisionDecisionMaker.com
- DoctorsOpposingCircumcision.org
- tinyurl.com/6y8xe5 (Procedure Video)
- tinyurl.com/6y8xe5 (Canadian Paediatric Society)



**Children's Health &
Human Rights Partnership**

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MALE INFANT CIRCUMCISION

Answers to common questions





WHAT IS CIRCUMCISION?

Circumcision is the cutting off of the fold of skin that normally covers and protects the glans of the penis. This double layer of skin, the prepuce, is commonly known as the foreskin. During circumcision, approximately 50% of the skin on the penis is removed, which translates to approx. 15 square inches (~100 cm²) of skin on the adult male penis.

INFANT PENIS

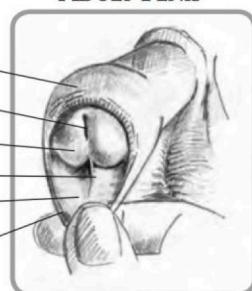


FORESKIN'S
OUTSIDE FOLD
FORESKIN
OPENING

ADULT PENIS

FORESKIN'S
OUTSIDE FOLD
MEATUS
GLANS
FRENULUM
FORESKIN'S
INSIDE FOLD

RIDGED BAND AND MU-
CUTANEOUS JUNCTION



Illustrations by Shaun Mather

WHAT ARE THE FUNCTIONS OF THE FORESKIN?

The foreskin comprises as much as half or more of the penile skin and has numerous functions. During infancy, the foreskin is attached to the glans and protects it from urine, feces, and abrasion from diapers/environment. Throughout life, the foreskin keeps the glans soft and moist and protects it from trauma and injury. Without this protection, the glans becomes dry, calloused, and desensitized from exposure and chafing.

20,000 specialized nerve endings in the foreskin and the gliding mechanism of the foreskin enhances sexual pleasure for both males and females.

WHAT ARE THE ORIGINS OF CIRCUMCISION IN CANADA?

Doctors in western English-speaking countries started circumcising babies in the mid-1800s to “prevent masturbation,” which was blamed for causing many diseases, including epilepsy, tuberculosis, insanity, and loss of skin. Since then numerous other benefits have been claimed, all of which have been largely disproven. Since 1975 the Canadian Pediatric Society (CPS) has not recommend circumcision as a health measure. There is no medical reason to have an infant/child circumcised. As a result, it is not covered under any provincial insurance plan in Canada.

Uncircumcised (intact) boys grow up just as healthy, and likely healthier, than their circumcised peers. No national or international medical association recommends circumcision. Some countries such as Sweden regulate the practice. In South Africa circumcision is banned. Circumcision continues largely due to cultural and religious reasons. Many parents circumcise their sons because the father was circumcised. Circumcision is also very profitable. It is a multi-billion dollar industry. Aside from the procedure itself, profit is made from the sale of materials used during the circumcision. The foreskin is also sold for scientific research and to produce cosmetic products.

WILL MY SON BE TEASED IF HE IS NOT CIRCUMCISED?

No, he will not be teased. As a whole, Canada is a very diverse country where differences are celebrated. For many years, the rates of circumcision have been declining. In fact, in 2009 it is estimated that between 9 – 31 % of male infants were circumcised, meaning that 69 – 91% of males were left uncircumcised (intact). This downward trend is expected to continue. On a related note, 85% of men in the world are not circumcised.

IS CIRCUMCISION PAINFUL?

Yes. Circumcision is extremely painful – and traumatic – for a baby. Just being strapped down is frightening for a baby. Babies are as sensitive to pain as anyone else. Most babies scream frantically when their foreskin is cut off. Some defecate. Some lapse into a coma. The reason some babies don't cry when they are circumcised is that they can't cry because they are in a state of shock. Most babies are circumcised without an anesthetic. Anesthetics injected into the penis don't always work. Being stuck with a needle in the penis is itself painful for a baby. Babies are rarely given pain medication after they are circumcised or during the week to ten days it takes for the wound to heal. Pain medication is not always effective and is never 100% effective.

ARE THERE RISKS?

Yes. The risks of circumcision include:

- Excessive bleeding and/or Infection
- Complications from anesthetics
- Psychological issues
- Surgical mistakes (e.g. loss of glans or penis)
- Death

Many circumcised males suffer from:

- Extensive scarring
- Skin tags and skin bridges
- Tearing and bleeding at the scar
- Curvature of the penis or painful erections
- Difficulty ejaculating and/or impotence
- Feelings of having been violated and mutilated, as well as additional psychological issues.

All circumcised males lose some or most of the sensitivity in their glans and all of the sensitivity in their foreskin.

NO NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL ASSOCIATION IN THE WORLD RECOMMENDS ROUTINE INFANT CIRCUMCISION FOR BOYS.

