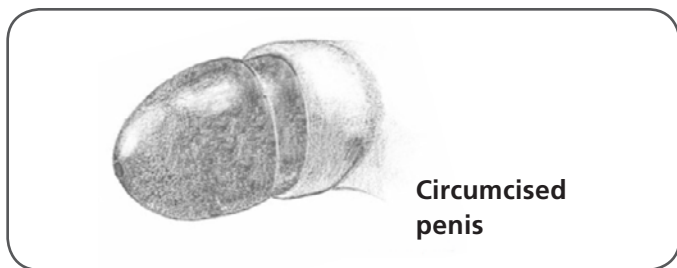
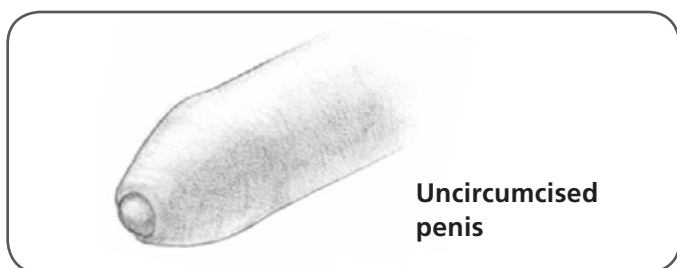


Let's Talk About...

Circumcision and Penis Care

What is circumcision?

Circumcision is a surgery to remove a fold of skin (the foreskin) from the tip (glans) of the penis. Boys are born with this skin fold. In circumcision, the foreskin is removed, exposing the tip of the penis.



How do I decide if my son should have a circumcision or not?

About 1.2 million newborn boys are circumcised in the United States every year. Circumcision is much more common in the United States, Canada, and the Middle East than in Asia, South America, Central America, and most of Europe. In the United States, white babies (81%) are more likely to be circumcised than black (65%) or Latino (54%) babies.

It is important for you to know that circumcision is not necessary, but it's also not harmful to a boy's health. The American Academy of Pediatrics (the organization of children's doctors) does not

recommend for or against circumcision. For some families, the choice is simple because of their culture or religion. For others, the right option is not as clear. Before you make a decision about circumcision, you should talk to your child's doctor and consider some of the issues and the risks and benefits of having the procedure performed. That will allow you to make the best choice for your child and family.

What are some pros and cons about having my son circumcised?

- Circumcised infants are less likely to get a urinary tract infection (UTI) in the first year of life.
 - About one out of every 1,000 circumcised boys has a UTI in the first year.
 - About one out of every 100 uncircumcised boys has a UTI in the first year.
 - After the first year, the UTI risk is about the same for circumcised and uncircumcised boys.
- Circumcised men may have less risk for cancer of the penis. But this cancer is rare in both circumcised and uncircumcised men in the United States.
- Circumcision probably helps defend against getting sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), particularly HIV, which causes AIDS.
- It is easier to keep a circumcised penis clean.
 - Uncircumcised boys can learn how to clean beneath the foreskin when the foreskin becomes retractable (able to slip back over the head of the penis toward the body). The foreskin becomes retractable usually before the boy is 5 years old.
 - Some uncircumcised boys have foreskin infections because of poor hygiene.

- Does the circumcision make the tip of the penis more or less sensitive?
 - Some say that circumcision either decreases or increases sensitivity of the tip of the penis, decreasing or increasing sexual pleasure later in life.
 - There is no proof that circumcision makes the tip of the penis more or less sensitive.
 - There is no proof that circumcision either decreases or increases sexual pleasure later in life.

What are the possible risks or complications of circumcision?

Complications of newborn circumcision are not common. They happen between one in 200 and one in 500 circumcisions. Your child's doctor can easily treat both of the most frequent complications which are:

- Minor bleeding
- Local infection

Are there other risks or complications?

Yes, re-adherence of the circumcision site to the tip of the penis. If this occurs, it may require minor surgery to correct the problem.

After the procedure and to prevent this problem, the doctor will apply petroleum jelly to the entire penis and may use a gauze wrap.

You can help prevent re-adherence by following the directions for using petroleum jelly in the section "How do I care for my child at home."

In rare cases, another risk or complication is too little or too much skin is removed.

- If too little skin is removed, the circumcision may have to be repeated.
- If too much skin is removed, the penis can take longer to heal, or may require reconstructive surgery.

If you decide to have your child circumcised, it is generally best for your son to have the operation in the first four weeks of life. Circumcision is more complicated as a child gets older.

In some cases, your child's doctor may delay the procedure or decide not to do it at all.

- Premature or medically unstable babies are not circumcised until they are ready to leave the hospital.
- Babies born with penis physical abnormalities that need surgery are often not circumcised. This is because the foreskin may be used for the reconstruction surgery.

What about pain?

Newborn babies feel pain. Circumcision can be painful. Pain medicine (local anesthetic) applied to the surgery area can greatly reduce your baby's discomfort by numbing the area. If you decide to circumcise your son, talk with his doctor about pain management.

Most doctors use one of these local anesthetics to make the operation less painful:

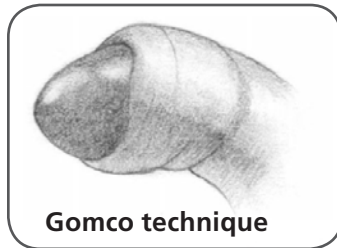
- A numbing cream put on the skin of the penis.
- A nerve block injected at the base of the penis. It is a pain medicine that numbs the nerve to the penis for a short time.
- A nerve block injected under the skin around the penis shaft. It is a pain medicine that numbs the nerve to the penis for a short time.

Your child may be given a sugar-dipped pacifier to help relieve pain and reduce his level of stress (and yours). Your son will also be secured in a padded restraint device. Used together, these can decrease discomfort by more than half.

How is the circumcision done?

If your child is circumcised with the Gomco method:

- The doctor clamps the Gomco device to your child's foreskin. This holds the foreskin away from the glans and protects the glans during the procedure.



- The doctor removes the foreskin.
- The doctor takes the Gomco device off and covers the incision with antibiotic ointment and a gauze bandage coated with petroleum jelly.

How do I care for my child at home?

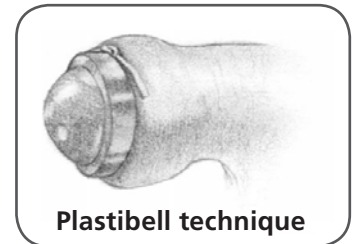
- Do not put your child in a bath tub until 24 hours after surgery.
- Your child's penis may have a soft, yellow scab for a few days. This is normal. Do not remove the scab, but do wash it gently.
- If your son has a gauze bandage on his incision, you might need to put on a new one with each diaper change. Do this for 1 or 2 days after the procedure before removing it.
 - Put petroleum jelly on the gauze so it will not stick to his skin.
- In rare occasions, a bandage may be used because of more serious bleeding. If this is the case, please discuss next steps with your son's doctor.
- **2 days** after the procedure apply **petroleum jelly** all over the tip and shaft of the penis.
- Applying petroleum jelly will help prevent:
 - Skin from the shaft of the penis sticking to the tip.
 - The diaper or underwear sticking to the wound.
- **Do this at every diaper change for 10–14 days.**
- **About 5–7 days** after the procedure and when the surgical wound has healed, apply the petroleum jelly all over the tip of the penis and in the groove just beneath the tip. You may need to gently push

the skin of the penis toward the body. This helps the tip to pop out and be seen.

- It usually takes 7–10 days for the penis to heal.

If you are unable to see the groove just beneath the tip, the skin may be getting stuck in place and you should call your child's pediatrician.

If your child is circumcised with the Plastibell method:



- The doctor puts the Plastibell device on the penis. The Plastibell device clamps the foreskin edge as it heals then slowly detaches from the penis.
- Your child will go home with this plastic cap in place. It will have a string tied around it to secure it in place.

How do I care for my child at home?

- Bathe your child as usual.
- The string and cap will normally fall off by itself in 5–8 days. Call your doctor if it has not fallen off in 10–12 days.
- A section of the cap may become detached before the other section. This is okay. If this happens, gently place the plastic cap back over the penis until the cap falls off completely.
- Sometimes, the string holding the foreskin to the Plastibell will fall off. If this happens, look for signs of bleeding and call your doctor.
- After the Plastibell has fallen off, apply petroleum jelly to the entire tip of penis.
- Gently retract the remaining skin and put petroleum jelly into the groove just beneath the tip. You may need to use a Q-tip to do this.
- Petroleum jelly will help your child's penis heal properly. Applying petroleum jelly will help prevent:
 - Skin from the shaft of the penis sticking to the tip.
 - The diaper or underwear sticking to the wound.

- Do this at every diaper change for 10–14 days.

If you are unable to see the groove just beneath the tip, then the skin may be getting stuck in place and you should call your child’s pediatrician.

How do I keep my son’s penis clean?

Whether you choose circumcision or not, it is important to keep your son’s penis clean. Wash his penis with soap and warm water when you bathe him. You do not need to use cotton swabs, astringents, or any special bath products.

With an uncircumcised boy, never forcibly pull back the foreskin to clean beneath it. Instead, gently tense the foreskin against the tip of the penis and wash off any smegma (the whitish “beads” of dead skin cells mixed with the body’s natural oil). Over time, the foreskin will retract on its own so it can be slipped back over the glans toward the body. This happens at different times for different children, but most boys can retract their foreskins by the time they are five years old.

As your son grows up, teach him to wash beneath the foreskin by gently pulling the foreskin back from the glans. Rinse the glans and the inside of the foreskin with soap and warm water, then pull the foreskin back over the head of the penis.

When should I call the doctor?

Watch for the following signs or symptoms that may need medical attention:

- Persistent bleeding. A spot larger than a 50 cent piece or if the blood drips like a nose bleed. This is not OK. Smaller blood spots in the diaper are OK.
- Redness around the tip of the penis that gets worse after 3 days.
- Fever.
- Infection signs such as the presence of pus-filled blisters.
- Unable to urinate (pee) normally 6–8 hours after the circumcision.
- Skin edges that are separated more than ¼ inch.
- Skin from the shaft of the penis seems to be sticking to the head, and you can’t easily push it back and see the entire head of the penis.

If you notice any of these signs or symptoms, call your child’s doctor right away. Almost all problems related to circumcision are easily treated if they are taken care of right away.