



Capitola Pediatrics

Infants, Children, Adolescents

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Circumcision is the procedure of removing a portion of the foreskin. The foreskin is the tissue at the end of the penis that covers the head (glans) of the penis. The foreskin protects the glans from stool, urine and other potential irritants. The foreskin itself can at times get irritated (balanitis). Occasionally the foreskin, which normally stretches with age, is unable to retract over the glans (phimosis).

Circumcision is somewhat controversial. Medically, there are risks and benefits associated with either decision.

The risks of circumcision are those of any surgical procedure; namely:

- ❖ Pain during the procedure
- ❖ Bleeding
- ❖ Infection
- ❖ The possibility of poor cosmetic outcome (poor appearance)

In addition:

- ❖ Removal of the foreskin can allow irritants to contact the glans, possibly causing narrowing (stenosis) of the urethral opening and partial blockage of the urine stream. Rarely, this may make it necessary to enlarge the urethral opening with a minor surgical procedure in later childhood.

The benefits of circumcision include:

- ❖ Lower risk of urinary tract infections during childhood
- ❖ Lower rates of penile cancer in adulthood (when compared to uncircumcised males)
- ❖ Easier hygiene

In addition:

- ❖ Circumcised boys do not have problems with either balanitis or phimosis.

Circumcision has some uncommon but real medical risks. Therefore, the decision to circumcise should not be driven by medical necessity, but rather should reflect your own personal desires or religious beliefs.

PRIOR TO THE CIRCUMCISION

A few simple things can make the circumcision process go more smoothly.

- ❖ Feed your baby about one hour before the circumcision.
- ❖ Give acetaminophen (Tylenol, Liquiprin) about 30 minutes before the procedure; the dose is 40 milligrams (1/2 dropper, or 0.4 ml of the infant drops).
- ❖ Please bring several clean diapers, diaper wipes, a blanket and a pacifier.
- ❖ If you have a particular music tape that is relaxing for your infant, bring it and we can play it for him.

DURING THE CIRCUMCISION

The procedure will take about 15 to 20 minutes. You are welcome to be present in the room if you like, although most parents prefer not to remain. If you feel tense or upset, your baby may sense this. In this case, it may be easier to wait in the reception area or take a brief walk outside.

AFTER THE CIRCUMCISION

A small plastic ring (called a plastibell) will be attached to the residual foreskin. After 5 to 10 days this will come off.

For the first 3 to 5 days a **simple dressing** on the end of the penis will be helpful. Apply a small amount of antibiotic ointment (polysporin or neosporin) to the center of a small sterile gauze (2 by 2 inch size). Place the gauze directly on the head of the penis, then fold the diaper closed as you would normally do. Change this dressing approximately 3 times a day, or more frequently if it becomes soiled with stool.

While the plastibell is attached you may give **sponge baths only**.

There may be a small amount of **yellow material** that appears on the surface of the foreskin as the plastibell begins to come off. This is normal. There may also be **slight redness or swelling** of the glans and residual foreskin as the plastibell separates. This is normal and should resolve in several days. Call us if there is more than a slight amount of redness or swelling. Likewise, call if you notice any blood on the gauze pad after the first 24 hours.

No special follow-up examination will be needed unless there are problems. The circumcision site will be evaluated as part of the full physical exam which occurs at the 2 week well-child check.

Check your baby's penis during his baths or diaper changes to make sure that the skin of the foreskin is not reattaching to the glans. If this is occurring, gently pull the foreskin back away from the glans to keep the adhesions from forming. You may want to have your pediatrician explain how to do this at the 2 week checkup.