



Childhood circumcision

Circumcision is a minor surgical procedure performed to remove a boy's foreskin for medical or social reasons.

Circumcision involves removal of the foreskin to expose the covered glans or head of the penis. This procedure has been performed for thousands of years for many reasons: ritual, religious, cosmetic and medical.

Most circumcisions performed in North America after the newborn period are needed for medical reasons. These include infections of the bladder or foreskin and, more commonly, tightening of the foreskin that prevents its retraction over the head of the penis (**phimosis**).

The procedure

If your doctor recognizes a problem with the foreskin, a circumcision may be recommended. The procedure is performed on an **out-patient basis** in an operating room. You will be contacted and given instructions regarding the time, date and location of the procedure.

At the hospital, your son will be prepared for surgery after a nurse has collected information. Any additional questions that you may have can be answered at that time.

Uncircumcised penis



The surgery is performed under **general anesthesia**, that is, your son will be put to sleep for the operation. It is important that he have nothing to eat or drink, including water, for several hours before the anesthetic to lessen the risks of vomiting. You will be informed of the time after which your son should have nothing to eat or drink.

After your son is asleep, the penis and surrounding skin will be carefully washed with an antiseptic solution. The foreskin is then removed after which the skin edges are brought together with stitches that will dissolve on their own. When the procedure is completed, the incision may be covered with antiseptic ointment and a dressing may be used. The entire operation usually takes less than an hour.

When the surgery is completed your son will be taken to the Recovery Room, where specialized nurses will watch him closely until the anesthetic has worn off and it is safe for him to go home. Your child should be able to return home about two hours after the operation.

After the surgery

Any pain after the operation can usually be controlled with **acetaminophen** (Tempra®, Tylenol®, etc.) at the dose recommended for your son's age.

Your son will be more comfortable in loose underwear and pants. Bring this type of clothing with him on the day of surgery. Most boys will be able to return to their usual activities, including sports and school, within a few days.

Your urologist may advise you to apply non-prescription **antiseptic ointment** to the incision. The stitches do not have to be removed; they will fall out on their own.

