



**BETTER
HEALTH**
greenhills

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Circumcision Information Sheet

What is a circumcision?

Circumcision is the surgical removal of the foreskin from the end of the penis, an area known as the glans.

What are the benefits?

The benefits vary from each child and can include:

- Prevention of recurrent infection of the foreskin
- Prevention of recurrent infection of the child's urinary tract
- To help urination if the child's foreskin is too tight

At birth, the foreskin is attached to the glans. The foreskin separates from the glans over time, creating a space between the skin and the glans and is completed over the first few years of life. Sometimes, the detachment is incomplete and forceful retraction can cause injury. This becomes evident later in the child's life during erection and sexual intercourse. Sometimes the foreskin will retract with difficulty but may not return to the normal position. This is an urgent cause for circumcision.

What are the risks?

This is a simple and safe operation but does carry some risks:

- Swelling of the penis lasting several days
- Post-operative bleeding (sometimes needing further procedure)
- Infection of the wound (sometimes needing further treatment and/or casual follow up)
- Change in the appearance to the glans (because of pre-existing diseases and/or difficulty separating the foreskin due to fusion to glans)
- On extremely rare occasions, narrowing of the glans' opening which may interfere with urination and require further treatment
- On rare occasions, change in sensation of the glans

Are there any alternatives?

The alternatives include stretching the foreskin while having a bath or having an operation that widens the foreskin.

If appropriate, our doctors will have already discussed these alternatives with you.



Plastibell



Circumcision board

What happens before the operation?

Before the procedure, the doctor will review the signing of the informed consent and will discuss the reasons for circumcision, benefits and risks as well as alternatives to ensure that the parents have a good understanding of what will happen during the operation. If there is anything you are unsure about, or if you have any questions, please ask the doctor **before** signing the consent form.

What happens during the operation?

Your doctor will administer a topical anaesthetic for your child 1.5 hours before the operation. Depending on your child, your doctor may also administer anaesthetic with an injection. Your child will also be given lollies during the operation. The sugar in the lollies stimulates your child's brain to release endorphins which act as natural painkillers.

Just prior to operating, your child will be secured on a circumcision board. Your doctor will clean the penile area with betadine, which will reduce infection risk, and establish a sterile field for operation. The doctor will make a cut in the foreskin before slipping the Plastibell device between the penis and the foreskin. Sterile string is tied around the device and over the foreskin to cut off the blood supply. The foreskin is then trimmed off and the end of the bell is removed with the ring tied in place.

The tissue remaining under the ring will die off eventually and fall off. The Plastibell device will fall off by itself in 10-12 days

Important things to look for in the next 24 hours:

- Active bleeding 1 hour after operation. Call or return to the GP. If after hours, go to the nearest emergency department
- Passing urine—sometimes the baby may not pass urine due to pain. Try leaving the nappy off, giving the baby a bath or feeding. If this does not work, give Panadol (as per instructions on the bottle). If the baby is still not passing urine, return to the GP or go to the nearest emergency department
- Swelling of the penis—some swelling is to be expected from all operations. If the swelling is excessive, return to the GP or go to the nearest emergency department
- Pinkish urine—the baby's first wet nappy might be a little pinkish due to the residual blood from the operation. This is normal
- Panadol—give only if the baby is not settling, seems in pain, or is unable to pass urine. Follow the instructions on the bottle

How to care for the circumcision:

- Bathe as per usual
- With each nappy change, use a warm wet cloth to drip water over the penis and the circumcision area to clean. Gently pat dry with a towel. If the baby has had a poo and the area is dirty, give the baby a bath and clean with the same method
- After patting dry the penis, apply Vaseline to the Plastibell and the tip of the penis. The Vaseline will discolour the string of the Plastibell, making it look dark brown. This is normal.
- Do not powder the area. This will cause irritation
- Allow the Plastibell to fall off on its own. Once it has fallen off, you may return to your baby's usual cleaning routine.



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Opening hours:

Mon-Fri: 8am-6pm

Sat: 8am-12pm

Sunday and
Public holidays: Closed