

Circumcision Information and Consent

You may be considering to have your newborn boy circumcised. Circumcisions are usually performed by your obstetrician before your baby is discharged from the hospital.

A circumcision is an elective surgical procedure, it is not required. A circumcision can only be performed with your written consent. Please read the following information before making the choice to circumcise your infant.

What is circumcision?

Baby boys are born with a covering called the foreskin. The foreskin covers the sensitive end of the penis, called the glans. A circumcision removes the foreskin of the penis, leaving the glans exposed.

Pain may be experienced during the procedure, yet major anesthesia is generally not used because of its potential harm to the baby. A local anesthetic is used to help alleviate pain. There are anesthetics that should not be used on infants with a family history of Methemoglobinemia. Please inform your physician if you have a family history of this disorder.

Why is circumcision performed?

There are hygienic reasons for circumcision. There is a thick white discharge of dead cells, Smegma, that can build up under the foreskin of males who are not circumcised. The build up of Smegma can lead to odor and/or infection. However, a boy can be taught to properly wash his penis so that odor and infection can be prevented.

There are personal reasons for circumcision. Some parents circumcise their infant if the father has been circumcised, or if the child will be in a culture where most boys are circumcised, so he does not look different from other males. For some parents, circumcision is part of a religious practice.

Are there health benefits associated with a circumcision?

Circumcision may help prevent cancer of the penis, a rare condition. Some research shows that circumcision may decrease the risk of a man getting an HIV infection from an infected female partner. Also, it is possible that a circumcision may help prevent passing HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases to a female partner. Circumcised infants appear to have less urinary tract infections than uncircumcised infant, though the risk for infection is low in both groups.

Currently, there is not sufficient information to recommend routine newborn circumcisions for health reasons.

What are the possible complications of circumcision?

Medical studies report widely varying rates of complications, however, complications are usually infrequent and minor. Complications may include bleeding, infection, and incomplete excision of the foreskin, requiring future revision. More serious complications are urethral injury, injury to the glans, and denuding an excess of the penile shaft. The true incidence of immediate and long term consequences of circumcision is unknown.

What are the contraindications to circumcision?

Certain boys should not be circumcised: 1) Premature infants. 2) Those who are ill. 3) Those with structural abnormalities of the penis. 4) Those with a family history of hemophilia or other bleeding disorder. Your physician must be informed if such a history exists. Serious bleeding could occur.

You may wish to consult with your pediatrician regarding his / her opinion on routine circumcision.

How do you take care of the circumcised penis?

Your nurse will show you how to care for the circumcised penis. For the first five to seven days as it heals, the penis is washed gently with soap and water and a generous amount of vaseline is applied. After it is healed, the penis is washed at bath time just as any other body part. When cleaning the penis, it is necessary to retract any foreskin not completely removed.

How do you take care of the uncircumcised penis?

The newborn’s foreskin cannot be retracted. By six months of age 25% of boys will have a retractable foreskin. At this time, you can gently attempt to pull back the foreskin during washing. If the foreskin is retractable, wash the end of the penis and carefully replace the foreskin in its original position. It is very important to replace the foreskin to its original position. A serious problem can result if the foreskin is left pulled back. The foreskin will be retractable by one year of age in 50% of boys, by two years of age in 80% of boys, by four years of age in 90% of boys, and by seventeen years of age in 99% of boys. If you cannot retract the foreskin, try again in a few months. The baby will not be harmed if you cannot wash under the foreskin. As the foreskin becomes retractable and as he learns to bathe himself, you can show him how to keep his penis clean.

Surgical observation

It is the policy of Edward Hospital, as well as the policy of Naperville Women’s Healthcare, that surgeries are not observed. Circumcision is a surgical procedure and parents will not be allowed to watch the circumcision of their infant.

It is your decision.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Congress of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and Naperville Women’s Health Care recommend that circumcision not be considered a routine procedure for all newborn boys as there is not an absolute medical indication for this procedure. If you decide to have your son circumcised, it is important that you understand the nature and consequences of the procedure. Please ask your physician any questions you have before you sign the surgical consent form.

Please sign, indicating that you have read and considered the information provided, and consent to the choice of circumcision.

Signature

Date

Signature

Date