

Infant Circumcision



Allina Health

Circumcision

Circumcision is the surgical removal of the foreskin at the end of the penis. Some parents circumcise their sons because of religious, cultural or social reasons. Other parents decide not to circumcise because it is not medically necessary. The decision is up to you.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) does not recommend circumcision to be routinely done for all newborn boys. However, the AAP states that the preventive health benefits of circumcision outweigh the risks of the procedure.

Circumcisions can be done in the hospital or at the clinic. A pediatrician or family medicine doctor will do the procedure.

Cost

Circumcision is an elective procedure. This means that your insurance company may not cover the cost of this procedure. It is important that you call your insurance company to check your coverage before the procedure.

In general, the cost of a circumcision is between \$250 and \$400. The cost is often divided into two bills: one for the procedure and one for the health care provider's time. Your insurance benefits will determine how much you will have to pay yourself.

If the procedure is done in the hospital, there will be an additional charge for hospital resources (such as a nurse, procedure room and circumcision kit). You will see this charge on your baby's hospital bill. It will range from \$235 to \$375. Generally this charge does not result in added out-of-pocket costs, however, please check with your insurance company before the procedure.

Payment

This procedure can be paid for in two different ways.

- **Insurance.** It is possible that your insurance may pay for part of the cost and you will have to pay for the rest. Your insurance company may require prior authorization before the procedure will be covered.
- **Self-pay:** You will be sent a bill after the procedure. Many Allina health clinics offer prepayment plans and discounts. If you would like more information about this option, please ask a member of the clinic staff. If needed, Allina Health hospitals may be able to offer self-pay discounts or payment programs. Call 1-800-859-5077 for more information.

Benefits

The health benefits of a circumcision include:

- slightly lower risk of getting a urinary tract infection during the first year of life (This risk is already low.)
- lower risk of getting cancer of the penis over a lifetime (This is a rare cancer.)
- much lower risk of getting sexually transmitted diseases, including genital herpes, human papillomavirus (HPV) and syphilis
- much lower risk of getting HIV (the virus that causes AIDS)
- reduced risk of cervical cancer in sexual partners
- prevention of infections in the foreskin
- prevention of an uncommon condition that makes it impossible to retract (pull back) the foreskin (also known as phimosis)
- easier genital hygiene.

Risks

There are risks of complications (problems) from the procedure. Although they are not common, they include:

- bleeding
- infection
- cutting the foreskin too short or too long
- improper healing.

The foreskin protects the tip of the penis. Without it, the tip can become irritated. This can make the opening of the penis too small. In rare cases, surgery is needed to fix this problem.

Pain Management

A circumcision is painful. A local anesthetic (medicine) will be used during the procedure to numb the area. This is safe and reduces both pain and stress.

Your son may also be given acetaminophen to help with the pain. Some infants are extra tired after the procedure. They also may not feed as well or as often for up to 24 hours after the procedure.

Circumcision Care

You will need to provide special care to the penis until it is healed.

- Completely cover the tip of the penis with petroleum jelly after each diaper change. Continue this for a full day (24 hours) after you no longer see bloody drainage in the diaper.

- Look at the tip of the penis each time you change his diaper. If there is any new bleeding, new or increased swelling, foul-smelling drainage, or reddened skin on the shaft of the penis, call your baby's health care provider. (A yellowish-white film will appear on the tip of the penis until the healing is complete. This is normal.)
- Do not use baby wipes until the tip of the penis has healed.
- Give your son a sponge bath until the penis has healed. This can take from 7 to 20 days.

Some health care providers use a circumcision device called a plastibell. This is a plastic ring that is placed under the foreskin and secured. It will fall off in 5 to 8 days. This kind of circumcision needs the same kind of care except do not put petroleum jelly or ointment on the tip of the penis.

Ask your health care provider for recommendations and advice about any other treatment or procedure.

Foreskin Care

If you choose not to have your baby circumcised, his penis needs no special care. Simply wash the genital area with soap and water during his bath. Do not force the foreskin back. This can cause bleeding, pain and possibly scarring.

As he grows, the foreskin will loosen on its own. This can take 3 or more years. As your son grows and the foreskin can be pulled back, he can then be taught how to care for his penis.

When To Call Your Baby's Health Care Provider

Problems with circumcision are rare. However, call your baby's health care provider right away if there is:

- bleeding that doesn't stop
- new bleeding
- new or increased swelling
- a foul-smelling drainage
- redness on the shaft of the penis
- redness at the tip of the penis that seems to be getting worse.

In addition, if your baby is circumcised after he leaves the hospital, call your baby's health care provider if he doesn't urinate normally within 12 hours after the circumcision.



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