

Circumcision Information Sheet

General indications for the proposed procedure/treatment:

There are many factors that influence parent's decision of whether or not to have their baby boy circumcised. Below are factors to consider.

- *Tradition* - Circumcision is very common. Some parents may wish to have their baby boy circumcised so that he looks like his father or other boys. Circumcision may also be done for religious or cultural reasons.
- *Hygiene* - In uncircumcised males, a substance called smegma, which is composed of old skin cells from the surface of the penis, can gather under the foreskin, causing odor and infection. An uncircumcised boy can be taught to clean this area daily to remove the smegma build-up. In order for the smegma to be thoroughly removed, the foreskin must be retracted. Retractability of the foreskin of the penis occurs in 50 percent of boys by their first birthday. Most boys (90 percent) can retract their foreskin by three to six years of age. Boys whose foreskin does not retract may need surgical correction. Parents should never force the foreskin to retract before it is ready.
- *Cancer prevention* - Cancer of the penis and prostate cancer occur less often in men who have been circumcised; however, it has not been proven that circumcision decreases a man's risk of prostate or penile cancer. The decrease in these cancers among circumcised men could be related to other environmental factors.
- *Sexually transmitted diseases* - Some studies have shown that uncircumcised males have a higher risk for sexually transmitted diseases. No definite conclusions have been reached regarding the relationship between sexually transmitted disease and circumcision.
- *Infection* - Circumcision may help prevent against urinary tract infections as well as reduce the risk for infection and inflammation of the penis.

Description of Procedure:

Circumcision is a minor surgical procedure that involves cutting away the foreskin that covers the head of the penis. Local anesthetics can be injected into the penis before the procedure to lower pain. The procedure lasts only a few minutes, but the penis may be tender for several days while healing. Circumcision is an elective procedure that usually occurs before a baby boy leaves the hospital. Whether or not to circumcise a baby boy is the parent's decision.

Risk of the Procedure:

The risks associated with the circumcision procedure have a very low incidence rate. The risks are excessive bleeding, infection and injury to the penis. Injury to the penis can include too much or too little foreskin removed during the circumcision. This can make the penis look slightly abnormal, and further surgical correction could be warranted.

Procedure Alternatives, if any:

There are no alternatives to a circumcision.

Probable consequences of Declining Procedure:

There are not any consequences for declining to circumcise the baby boy.

Person(s) Performing the Procedure:

The key portions of the procedure will be performed by a physician who is a member of the medical staff of Rush University Medical Center and/or a resident/fellow who is observed by a physician who is a member of the medical staff. Residents/Fellows are licensed physicians in approved residency or post residency training programs. Parts of the procedure which they perform will be based on their level of competency.