

## Patient information

### **Balanitis Xerotica Obliterans (BXO)**

Urology Department

Balanitis Xerotica Obliterans (BXO) is a scarring condition, which can affect the foreskin, penile and scrotal skin and very occasionally the urethra. In mild cases it can be treated with steroid creams. In more severe cases it requires surgical removal of the foreskin (circumcision). This leaflet tells you about Balanitis Xerotica Obliterans.

#### **What is balanitis xerotica obliterans (BXO)?**

Balanitis Xerotica Obliterans (BXO) is a chronic progressive scarring condition. The cause of it is unclear. A similar condition known as Lichen sclerosis occurs in other parts of the body. It occurs in between 1 in 300-1000 men and can occur at any age.

#### **How does BXO present itself?**

BXO often starts with mild changes on the penis and foreskin. There can be mild itching and burning and altered sensation over the glans. If the urethra (water pipe) is affected, then you may experience discomfort passing urine or a change in the force or stream quality of the urine. The foreskin may become tight and start to look white and there may be difficulty in retracting your foreskin when your penis is erect, causing the foreskin to get stuck back.

Later, the normal colouration of your penis may change to look white and scarred and patches with purple edges may develop. In extreme cases the foreskin can stick down onto the head of the penis and the entrance to the urethra can become very narrow.

#### **What causes BXO?**

The cause is unknown. Various factors have been proposed these include a genetic predisposition, the presence of human papilloma viruses (wart viruses), auto immune disease or hormonal factors.

#### **How is the diagnosis made?**

The diagnosis is made by taking a biopsy. In most cases this actually involves undertaking a circumcision, which sorts out the problem with the tight foreskin at the same time as making a diagnosis.

#### **What is the possible treatment?**

In the early stages BXO can be treated with topical steroid creams, but if scarring has already occurred, these are unlikely to improve the situation.

Once the foreskin has become scarred, the treatment of choice is a circumcision. Following a circumcision all the BXO may have been removed and everything may settle down.

### **What do I need to look out for after my circumcision?**

If the areas on the penis are not healing or you develop new patches of decreased pigmentation or scarring then you should see your GP who can prescribe steroid cream and refer you to a Dermatologist.

If you develop problems with your urinary stream then it is possible that you have recurrence of the BXO in the urethra and you need to see your family doctor (GP) so you can be re-referred to an Urologist.

### **Feedback**

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

### **Further information**

**For general queries about BXO telephone the Urology Centre**

**Tel: 0151 282 6809**

**Text phone number: 18001 0151 282 6809**

**For clinical questions specific to your case, telephone the secretary of your Urology Consultant**

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