

Patient information

Circumcision

Urology Department

Your doctor has advised you to have a circumcision. This leaflet explains what to expect when you have a circumcision.

What is a circumcision?

Circumcision is surgical removal of your foreskin.

Why would I be having this done?

You will have been recommended a circumcision because your foreskin is tight or scarred. This may be giving you problems with splitting and bleeding or forming a tight band making sexual intercourse painful. It may be preventing your foreskin from retracting over the head of your penis causing difficulty with hygiene.

What are the benefits of this procedure?

The intended benefits of this procedure are to remove the foreskin and treat foreskin abnormalities.

What are the risks of having a circumcision?

Most procedure have possible side effects although the complications listed below are well recognised most patients do not suffer any problems.

Common: greater than one in ten)

- Swelling of the penis lasting several days.
- Occasional: (between one in ten and one in fifty).
- Bleeding of the wound occasionally needing a further procedure.
- Infection of the incision requiring further treatment and / or casualty visit.
- Permanent altered or reduced sensation in the head of the penis.
- Persistence of the absorbable stiches after three to four weeks, requiring removal.

Rare

- Scar tenderness.
- Failure to be completely satisfied with the cosmetic result.
- Occasional need for removal of excessive skin at a later date.
- Permission for biopsy of abnormal area on the head of penis if malignancy is a concern.

Hospital acquired infection

- Colonisation with MRSA (0.9% - 1 in 110).
- Clostridium difficile bowel infection (0.01% - 1 in 10,000).
- MRSA Bloodstream infection (0.2% 1 in 5000).

The rates for hospital acquired infection may be greater in high-risk patients for example those patients:

- with long term drainage tubes
- who have had their bladder removed due to cancer
- who have had a long stay in hospital

Or

- who have been admitted to hospital many times.

Are there any alternative treatments available?

Sometimes topical application of creams to the foreskin can improve the problem but once it gets severe these are unlikely to be successful. If you have diabetes, then having good diabetic control can heal some foreskin problems. More minor surgical procedures such as frenuloplasty (dividing the frenulum, which is the strip of skin which attaches the foreskin to the penis) or preputioplasty (dividing the foreskin) may be possible.

What will happen if I decide not to have treatment?

Your foreskin may remain as it is currently or the problem may get worse leading to increasing discomfort or problems with retraction.

What anaesthetic will I be given?

You may be given general anaesthetic, or local anaesthetic. General anaesthesia is drug-induced unconsciousness. It is always provided by an anaesthetist, who is a doctor with specialist training. Local anaesthesia is drug-induced numbness: it may be provided by an anaesthetist, surgeon or other healthcare professional, depending on the technique used.

Unfortunately, both local and general anaesthesia can cause side effects and complications. Side effects are common, but are usually short-lived: they include nausea, confusion and pain. Complications are very rare, but can cause lasting injury: they include awareness, paralysis and death.

There is a risk of damage to teeth, particularly caps or crowns and veneers. Your anaesthetist will take every care, but occasionally damage can occur.

The risks of anaesthesia and surgery are lower for those who are undergoing minor surgery, and who are young, fit, active and well.

You will be given an opportunity to discuss anaesthetic options and risks before your surgery.

For more information, please ask for a copy of the Royal College of Anaesthetists patient information You and Your Anaesthetic.

How do I prepare for the procedure?

- Circumcision is normally carried out as a day case procedure.
- A short time before your procedure you will be asked to attend the preoperative assessment clinic where you will be seen by a specialist nurse who will assess your general health and book any investigations you may need before attending theatre. These can include blood samples, urine samples, a chest x-ray or an ECG (heart tracing).
- You will be given instructions regarding fasting before the procedure.
- Normal medication should be taken unless instructed otherwise.
- You should make sure you have some painkillers at home before you come to hospital.
- If you are taking any tablets to thin the blood such as Warfarin, Aspirin or Clopidogrel it is important that you let the doctor or nurse know because they may need to be stopped for several days before the operation can be done.

What does the operation involve?

The operation involves the removal of your foreskin, which leaves the head (glans) of your penis exposed.

What should I expect after my operation?

- After your operation has finished, you will stay up in theatre in the recovery suite until you are fully recovered from the anaesthetic, and the anaesthetist is happy for you to return to the ward.
- The nursing staff will ask you at intervals whether you have passed urine. This is quite a normal question after any operation.
- A nurse will check your pulse, blood pressure, breathing and wound regularly. It is important that if you feel any pain you must tell the nursing staff, who can give you painkillers to help.

If you have had a General Anaesthetic

The nursing staff will also advise you when you can start taking sips of water.

Anaesthetics can make some people sick. If you feel sick we advise you not to drink until this feeling has passed. The nursing staff may offer an injection to help this sick feeling go away.

Going Home

If you have had a General Anaesthetic:

- You must have had something to eat and drink.
- You must have passed urine.
- The nursing staff must be satisfied with your wound.

If you have had a general anaesthetic and/or sedation, you must have a friend or relative to take you home and have a responsible adult to stay with you for 24 hours.

For next 24 hours you must not

- Travel alone
- Drive any vehicle e.g. car, scooter or ride a motorcycle or bicycle
- Operate machinery (including domestic appliances such as a kettle)
- Climb ladders
- Make important decisions, sign any business or legal documents
- Drink alcohol
- Return to work within 12 hours of treatment. Your general health and any medicines you are taking may increase the time you need off work.

You should

- Take it easy for the rest of the day, avoid strenuous activity
- Take your medications as usual
- Let someone else care for anyone you usually look after, such as children or elderly or sick relatives.

If you have had a Local Anaesthetic:

- You must have had something to eat and drink.
- You must have passed urine.
- The nursing staff must be satisfied with your wound.

What can I expect after the operation?

- A light gauze dressing is usually in place after the operation. This often falls off within the first few hours, if it does not then the day after surgery it can be soaked in warm water and removed gently. It should not be pulled off, as this will cause trauma to the suture line.
- You can take a short shower from the evening after the operation. You can take a bath from 48 hours after the operation. You should not use any soap or other toiletries just warm water. You can add salt to the bath if you wish. You should bathe the penis twice a day and dry carefully until the wound has healed.
- Do not apply any creams, talcum powder or medication to the wound as they may trap bacteria and could cause infection.
- The stitches are self-dissolving and do not have to be removed. If they persist after the wound has healed you can ask your practice nurse to remove them.
- You should avoid sexual intercourse until the scar is completely healed as an erection can cause discomfort and cause the stitches to fall out.

After discharge

- An outpatient's appointment is not required but if you have any problems you are advised to contact your family doctor (G.P.) or the Accident and Emergency Department.

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

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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