

Children's Services

Circumcision

What is a circumcision?

Circumcision is an operation to remove the foreskin. The foreskin is the sleeve of skin around the tip of the penis.

Removing the foreskin changes the appearance of the penis and it is important to discuss this with your son before surgery to prepare him.

Why is the operation needed?

Circumcision is carried out on boys who have a history of recurrent troublesome infections to try and prevent these. Circumcision is also performed on boys who have a very tight scarred foreskin as part of their treatment (called 'BXO' – Balanitis xerotica obliterans).

(This operation may also be carried out, although not on the NHS, for religious/cultural reasons).

The operation

- Circumcision will normally be carried out as a day case so that your son can return home on the same day as the operation.
- The operation involves the surgeon cutting away the foreskin. Stitches may/may not be put around the head of the penis.
- If stitches are used, these are dissolvable (it can take a few weeks for them to dissolve completely) and so do not require removing.

After the operation

It is important to tell your son about the change in appearance of his penis.

After the operation the penis will look red and quite swollen for a number of days. This is normal and is part of the healing process. The swelling and redness will gradually settle but may take a few weeks.

Your son will be observed for a few hours on the ward after his operation but will then usually be able to go home after he has passed urine.

Risks of this operation will be discussed fully with you when you sign the consent form. Risks are rare but include bleeding and infection.

Looking after your son at home

- We advise that, to prevent discomfort, your son wears loose fitting clothes for the journey home and for a few days after the operation (for example, tracksuit trousers, 'jogging bottoms' rather than jeans.)
- Before leaving hospital you may be given some antibiotic ointment to apply to the tip of your son's penis. This should be applied twice daily and should continue until the penis is dry.
- Allow babies to spend time (where possible) without a nappy on. When changing nappies during the first few days after the operation, it is advised that a coating of Vaseline is smeared onto the inside of the nappy. This prevents any friction between the wound and the nappy.
- Your son should be given painkilling medicine as directed by your nurse. Always read the instructions on the bottle. It is advised that the painkilling medicine is given regularly for the first 24-48 hours to prevent discomfort becoming too bad.
- Your son should not be bathed for five days after surgery. Sponge washes are allowed. This is to prevent infection.
- Occasionally a dressing is put on over the penis. This dressing usually falls off on its own. However, if still in place by the time your son is allowed a bath, the dressing can be soaked off in the bath (sometimes it may take a few consecutive baths before the dressing comes off completely).
- Your son should rest at home for a few days and should not take part in any sport or strenuous activities until his penis has healed and is dry. This usually takes about 10-14 days. Sometimes a scab may form at the tip of the penis which may take a few weeks to fall off.

Follow up arrangements:

Your son will be reviewed in the outpatient clinic. This may be between two weeks and three months after the operation depending on the reason for the circumcision being undertaken. The doctors/nurses will let you know when your son is due to return for his check up and the actual appointment will be sent to you in the post. At the outpatient appointment your son may be asked (if toilet trained) to undertake a urine test so it is helpful if he can arrive at the appointment with a 'full bladder'.

If you have any questions or require further information please contact:

Ward:
Your Nurse Specialist:



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Help with this leaflet:



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patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk



Document history

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