

## **Patient information from Gordon Muir, Consultant Urological Surgeon**

Please do not rely on this information unless you have been specifically sent this by Mr Muir

### **Frenuloplasty**

The frenulum, (the name is derived from the Latin word *frenulum* meaning “little bowstring”), is the small bridge of skin lying from the underside of the tip of the penis to the underside of the foreskin. It is a very sensitive area and many men find stimulation of the frenulum very arousing. While normally this piece of skin is reasonably long and elastic, in a substantial minority of men it is either too short from the beginning or else develops scarring which makes it prone to tearing and splitting particularly during intercourse.

This can be quite alarming since occasionally there is vigorous bleeding from the frenulum due to the small artery which runs inside it.

Although some surgeons will recommend a circumcision for men who have a frenular problem, there is really no need for this in the vast majority of men since a small plastic surgical operation will lengthen the frenulum adequately in more than 90% of patients.

As an alternative to any surgery, some men have reported success with frenular stretching at home, but few seem to succeed with this.

#### **The Frenuloplasty Operation**

A frenuloplasty is an operation which lengthens the frenulum.

This is a procedure which is simply performed under local anaesthesia and can be carried out in the outpatient's procedure room without necessitating admission to hospital.

Essentially a very small amount of anaesthetic is put into the area. A cut is made in the shape of a V which is then gradually loosened and sewn up in the shape of a Y usually increasing the length of the frenulum by around 1 to 1.5cm. Sometimes a modification of the plasty using “Z-plasties” may be more appropriate. Simple division of the frenulum is quicker but this does not give so much length and may leave unsightly skin tags, so it is not usually recommended.

Small dissolving stitches are placed and these will usually fall out after a week to ten days. If they take a little longer there is no need to worry.

From the point of view of pain relief, most men do not require anything apart from the anaesthetic although it may be advisable to take something along the lines of a Paracetamol or Nurofen prior to going to bed at night for the first day or two.

It is important to apply a moisturising cream and to wash the foreskin twice daily since, if the frenular area is not extended then it may scar down again. We usually recommend simply washing with warm water, patting the penis dry and then placing a small amount of E45 cream (available from any chemist) on the area before replacing the foreskin. There may be a little bleeding for 12 – 48 hours after the operation but this is rarely enough to stop men going about their normal daily activities.

It takes about 12 weeks for the operation to fully heal but most men are able to resume sex after 4-6 weeks - extra lubrication may be helpful. Occasionally severely scarred skin may contract down again necessitating circumcision, but this is unusual – overall the success rate is in excess of 90% in our

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published series which has the highest rate of follow up in the literature and which described my technique.

### **Advice Service for Men with Frenular Problems**

Men, particularly if they have not had frenuloplasty discussed as an option, are often unsure as to whether they may be able to avoid a circumcision. We may be able to give a provisional idea on this if a good quality digital photograph of the end of the penis and frenulum is sent.

While we are happy to offer this as a free advisory service please note that it is impossible to give a formal opinion by email and any advice given in the absence of a consultation cannot be regarded as a basis for any modification of treatment or advice offered by other doctors.

**It is not possible to offer *any* advice by email unless patient images are available, and we are unable to offer advice on treatment given by other specialists.**