

Information for parents Circumcision of newborns

For: _____ From: Dr. _____

Circumcision is one of the oldest known surgical procedures, and is the most frequently performed surgical procedure for boys in North America. Nearly 50% of parents in Canada decide that their sons should be circumcised. One of the biggest reasons many people want their children to be circumcised is because they want a boy "to look like his father".

But the decision to circumcise still remains controversial. In 1996, the Fetus and Newborn Committee of the Canadian Paediatric Society recommended that newborn males should *not* be circumcised routinely. As the parents, however, the decision is entirely your own.

What are the pros and cons of newborn circumcision?

There are several *benefits* to circumcision; these include the following:

- It can prevent urinary-tract infections later in life (although the risk is higher just after the circumcision)
- It can prevent future problems, such as not being able to retract the foreskin, possible inflammations of the head and foreskin of the penis and possible skin disease on the head and foreskin of the penis.
- It ensures good genital hygiene, as some males may not be careful to always clean the penis sufficiently.
- It has been demonstrated—although not

proven—that circumcision of newborns can help to prevent sexually transmitted diseases later in life as well as helping to protect men from cancer of the penis.

There are also several *negative effects* of circumcision, too; these include the following:

- A risk of excessive bleeding and infection right afterward
- A risk of an accident during the operation, causing disfigurement or injury
- Narrowing of the urine and sperm passageway in the penis
- A risk of causing the baby to hold his urine
- A risk of sexual dissatisfaction

There are other, less frequent potential complications that your doctor may explain. There is also pain with the procedure.

How much does it hurt— and what can be done for my baby's pain?

Most newborns are still circumcised without anesthesia or painkillers, and studies show that they experience significant discomfort during the procedure. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the use of analgesics and anesthesia in infants. Nerve blocks, a sucrose-flavored pacified, creams and lidocaine are all effective in reducing pain during and after circumcision. Ask your doctor what he or she would suggest.

Additional Information _____

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