



Onkwehón:we Midwives Collective  
 891 Island Road, Akwesasne, ON K6H5R7  
 T. 613-938-2229 F. 613-932-5080 eFax. 1-613-902-3511

## Circumcision

**What is circumcision?:** It is a surgical procedure to remove the layer of skin, called the foreskin, that covers the head of the penis and part of the shaft. It is usually done in the first few days after the birth of a baby boy.

Circumcision is a procedure that is not medically necessary. The Canadian Pediatric Society (CPS) **DOES NOT** recommend routine circumcision for newborn boys.

### Risks and Benefits of Circumcision

Risks	Benefits
2-3/1000 will have serious complications such as too much skin removed or very excessive bleeding.	Slightly lower risk of developing cancer of the penis if circumcised (1/1 million) compared to non-circumcised penis (3/1 million).
20-30/1000 will have surgical complications like too much bleeding and infection.	Slightly lower risk of urinary tract infection (2/1000 if circumcised compared to 7/1000 if not)
Anesthetic complications like bruising and swelling.	
Painful	
Expensive (not covered by OHIP)	

**Food for thought:** 10/1000 babies who are circumcised will have to be re-circumcised due to poor results the first time. 10/1000 non-circumcised babies will have to be circumcised later in life.

Caring for a circumcised penis	Caring for an uncircumcised penis
After circumcision, comfort baby by holding him and nursing him as much as he wants.	The foreskin that covers the shaft and head of the penis will separate over time. You do not need to do anything to make that happen.
It should take 7-10 days to heal. It may be red for a few days as well as have yellow discharge.	Teach you boy as he grows up how to keep his penis clean as well as the rest of his body. As the foreskin becomes retractable, teach him to wash underneath it each day.
Keep area as clean as possible. Clean with gentle soap and water. Remove bits of stool. Change bandage every time you change your baby (use Vaseline to prevent from sticking to bandage)	Do not try to pull back the foreskin. Gently wash the penis during his bath. The foreskin may not be retractable until 3-5 years old and even at puberty.
Call the doctor who performed the circumcision if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More than a few drops of blood</li> <li>- Redness and swelling around circumcision does not go down after 2 days.</li> <li>- Your baby develops a fever &gt;37.5C</li> <li>- Your baby seems to be sick</li> </ul>	When the foreskin separates, skin cells will shed and new ones will develop to replace them. These dead cells will work their way down the penis through the tip and they may look like cheesy white lumps (smegma). You do not need to force them out. Just wipe them away once they come out.

This handout was produced from information from the Canadian Pediatric Society. For more information and for more child health information visit: [www.caringforkids.cps.ca](http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca)