



# SHOULD I HAVE MY BABY CIRCUMCISED?

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## WHAT IS CIRCUMCISION?

Circumcision is a surgery that removes the skin that covers the tip of the penis, called the "foreskin". Circumcision is usually done when a baby boy is between 1 and 10 days old. It is more common in some parts of the world than others. Circumcision is also a common tradition in some religions.

## SHOULD I HAVE MY BABY CIRCUMCISED?

- There is no easy answer, and different people feel differently about this decision.
- Circumcision has some benefits. But it also has some risks. After talking with your baby's doctor, you will have to decide for yourself what is right for your family.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF CIRCUMCISION?

- Circumcised boys seem to have slightly lower rates of:
  - Urinary tract infections
  - Swelling of the opening at the tip of the penis
- As adults, circumcised males seem to have slightly lower rates of:
  - Urinary tract infections
  - Swelling of the opening at the tip of the penis
  - Penis cancer
  - HIV and other infections that you catch during sex
  - Cervical cancer in the women they have sex with
- Even so, the risks of these problems are small, even in people who have not been circumcised. Also, people who are not circumcised can lower these extra risks by:
  - Cleaning their penis well
  - Using condoms during sex

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF CIRCUMCISION?

- Risks include:
  - Bleeding or infection from the surgery
  - Damage to the penis
  - A chance that the doctor will cut off too much or not enough of the foreskin
  - A chance that sex won't feel as good later in life
- Only about 1 out of every 200 circumcisions leads to problems. There is also a chance that your health insurance won't pay for circumcision.

## HOW IS CIRCUMCISION DONE IN BABIES?

- First, the baby gets medicine so he won't feel pain. This might be a cream on the skin or a shot into the base of the penis. Next, the doctor cleans the baby's penis well. Then they use special tools to cut off the foreskin. Finally, the doctor wraps a gauze bandage around the baby's penis.
- If you have your baby circumcised, his doctor or nurse will give you instructions on how to care for him after the surgery. It is important that you follow those instructions carefully.

If you are looking for more in-depth information about circumcision, you can read UpToDate's Circumcision in baby boys (Beyond the Basics):  
[https://www.uptodate.com/contents/circumcision-in-baby-boys-beyond-the-basics?topicRef=15615&source=see\\_link#H1](https://www.uptodate.com/contents/circumcision-in-baby-boys-beyond-the-basics?topicRef=15615&source=see_link#H1)