

Circumcision

What is Circumcision?

Circumcision is an operation to remove the foreskin.

Why do I need this procedure/surgery?

It may be performed for various reasons including:

- Phimosis (a condition in which a tight, non-retractable foreskin may make hygiene difficult, causes painful erections or urinary tract infections)
- Paraphimosis (a tight band in foreskin that causes strangulation of the head of the penis)
- Recurrent balanoposthitis (inflammation of the head of the penis and foreskin)
- Skin disease of the foreskin
- Cancer or pre-cancerous growths on the foreskin

What Are The Preparations?

Before the procedure you will need to undergo an assessment by the anaesthetist, who will determine if you are fit for general anaesthesia.

You will also need to stop any blood thinning medication that may increase your risk of bleeding. Stopping duration may range from 5-10 days depending on the medication. Please inform your doctor if you are taking any blood thinning medications.

You will also need to fast 8 hours before the procedure.

How is the Surgery Performed?

The procedure is usually performed under general or regional anaesthesia. This is typically a day surgery procedure (i.e. patients need not be admitted to the hospital).

The cuff of foreskin covering the head of the penis is removed, leaving the head exposed. The wound is closed circumferentially with an absorbable suture which will usually disappear in six weeks.

What Are The Risks and Complications of the Surgery?

Common

Increased sensitivity of the head of the penis which may last several months

Less Common (<2%)

- Bleeding, occasionally requiring a further procedure for bleeding control
- Wound infection and breakdown, requiring antibiotics and rarely surgical drainage

Rare (<1%)

- Meatal stenosis (narrowing of urine passage opening)
- Injury to the head of penis
- Excessive shortening of penile skin, requiring further corrective surgery

Risk of General Anaesthesia

- Stroke (cerebrovascular accident)
- Heart attack (myocardial infarction)
- Abnormal heart rhythms (cardiac arrhythmias)
- Clot in leg vein(s) (deep vein thrombosis)
- Clot in lung blood vessels (pulmonary embolism)

What Would I Expect After The Procedure/Surgery?

Usually this procedure is performed as a day surgery.

Swelling along the wound lasting several days is expected. Healing can take up to 4 weeks. The exposed head will feel very sensitive for the first few weeks, then improves.

The sutures will dissolve by themselves in six weeks and there is no need to remove them.

You will be prescribed oral painkillers and hospitalization leave.



Keep the wound dry for 48 hours. The wound should be kept clean till complete healing.

Should the wound get contaminated by urine (or by faeces for incontinent patients on diapers), the wound should be washed clean with shower spray without scrubbing/scratching. The wound should be patted dry after.

Loose-fitting clothing or sarong is recommended after the procedure.



You should also avoid any sexual activity or stimulation till the wound is fully healed.

What Are The Options?

Dorsal slit incision for phimosis / paraphimosis. This is a simpler procedure to relieve the tight foreskin but often associated with a less cosmetic outcome.

What Will Happen If I Do Not Undergo the Procedure/Surgery?

Phimosis can result in urinary retention, where you are unable to pass urine as the foreskin has closed up completely. Worsening phimosis can also result in persistent infections of the foreskin, or urinary tract infections.

Untreated paraphimosis can result in irreversible tissue damage of the head of the penis.

Cancer / pre-cancerous conditions of the foreskin, if untreated, will progress to various morbidities and mortality.



Contributed by Urology

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