

sexual activity. Hygiene is one reason; increased penile and vaginal contact and stimulation is another.

- In general, sexual function and sensation is the same or better in circumcised men. The problem of overly tender sensitivity of the head of the penis experienced by many uncircumcised men is virtually eliminated

## Risks and recovery after circumcision

- All surgery involves some risk, but in western countries risks from circumcision in men and teens are low, and are lower still for infant circumcisions. Around 2-3% of men circumcised by experienced practitioners will have a minor complication such as bleeding or infection. Each is easily treated. Often what some report as local infection is actually part of the normal healing process. The risk of serious injury is extremely rare.

- Circumcision is not advised for men with a bleeding disorder such as *hemophilia*. If it is medically necessary, it will require a specialized team of physicians.

- A local *anaesthetic* (plus a mild sedative) is usually preferable for a circumcision, but some surgeons will insist on a general, depending in part on the circumcision technique they use. An oral analgesic medication is often prescribed for pain relief after the anaesthetic wears off, but many men find it unnecessary. Often there is very little post-operative discomfort and normal activities can be resumed after 24 hours.

- After surgery there is some swelling, which will resolve within a few weeks. Healing is not complete until the sutures dissolve. This usually occurs within four weeks, after which sexual activity may be resumed. Final cosmetic appearance takes longer.

## In conclusion

*Circumcision confers a lifetime of medical benefits. Many uncircumcised males will develop a medical condition leading to suffering and, in some cases, even death. In contrast, circumcision can prevent most of these medical conditions. The surgical risk of circumcision in a modern setting is extremely low, while the long-term functional and cosmetic outcomes are generally excellent.*

## Thus, the benefits of circumcision greatly outweigh any risks.

### Further information

may be obtained from the following web sites.

<http://www.circinfo.net> (Dr. Morris)

<http://www.medicirc.org> (Dr. Schoen)

<http://www.gilgalsoc.org> (The Gilgal Society)

<http://www.aboutcirc.info> (Dr. Cox)

<http://www.circumcision.com.au> (Dr. Russell)

<http://www.circumcisioninfo.com> (Dr. Lacock)

<http://www.samkuninmd.com> (Dr. Kunin)

<http://www.geocities.com/HotSprings/2754> (Mr. Cormier)

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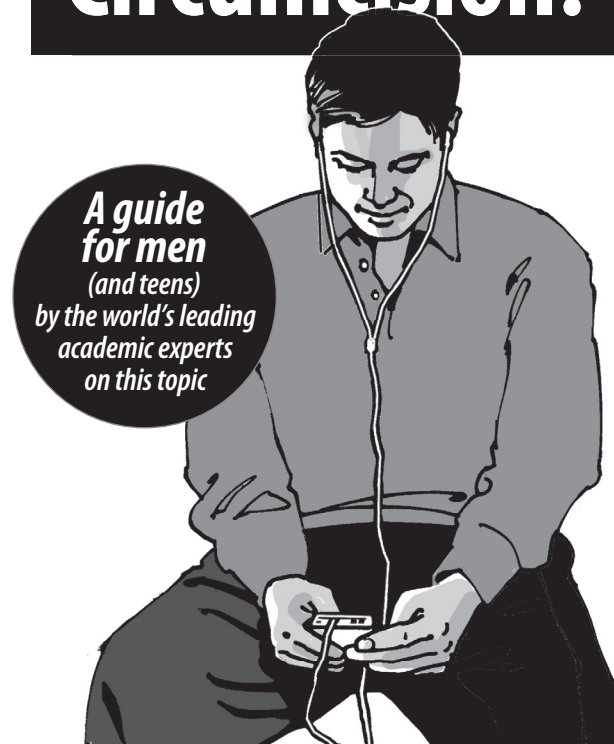
Edgar Schoen, MD (Oakland, USA), who for many years was the Chair of the American Academy of Pediatrics Task Force on Circumcision, kindly served as a consultant.

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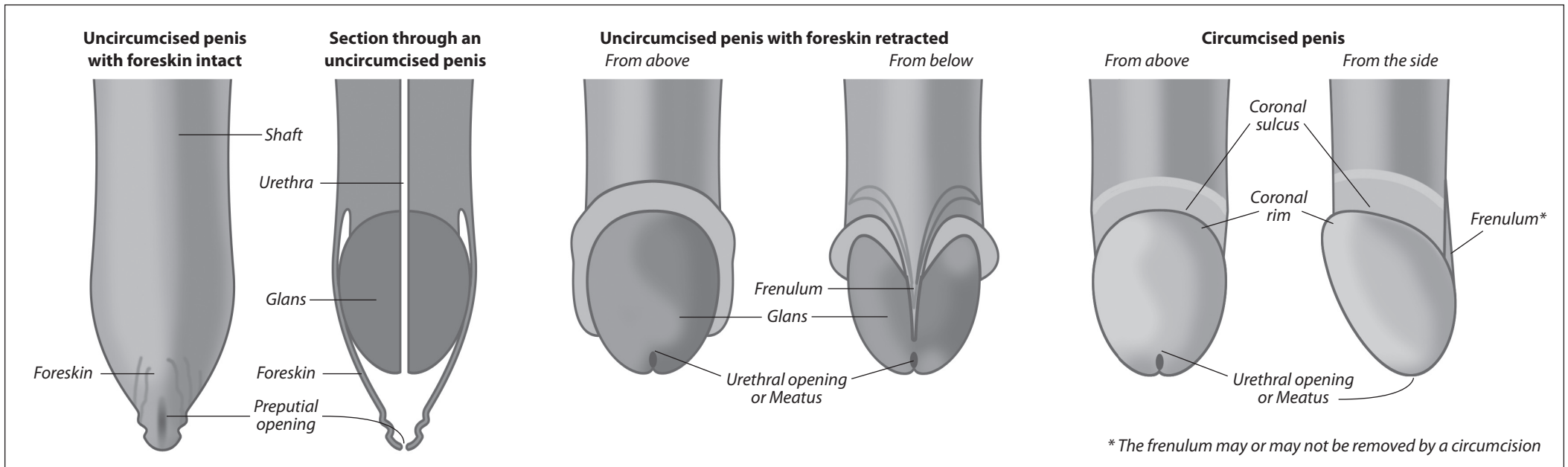
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# Have you heard about the benefits of Circumcision?



Circumcision is a simple surgical procedure that removes the foreskin – a sleeve of skin covering the tip of the penis. Although infancy is the ideal time for a circumcision, many adult men and teens seek circumcision for medical, health, sexual, cultural, religious or cosmetic reasons. A man does not need to have a medical reason to have a circumcision. Personal preference or social reasons are perfectly valid. In order to make an informed decision, he must carefully consider the benefits and risks.

Since the foreskin traps bacteria and other infectious agents, as well as accumulating malodorous smegma, its removal improves *genital hygiene* and reduces risk of diseases and other conditions over the lifetime of the man and his sexual partners.



## History

Circumcision has been performed for thousands of years as part of the culture of indigenous people who live in hot environments such as in Australia, the Pacific Islands, equatorial countries, the Middle East, Africa and the Americas. Worldwide, approx 25% of males are circumcised, with large variations between countries and ethnic groups. Higher socio-economic-educational ranking is associated with higher rates of circumcision. In two western countries where circumcision is common, rates today for men are 85% (US-born) and 69% (Australian-born). For newborns, rates there decreased in the 1970s-80s, then rose again in line with medical research findings that attested to the benefits.

## Benefits of circumcision

- Eliminates the risk of *phimosis*, which affects 1 in 10 teenage boys and men. This condition refers to a tight foreskin that cannot be pulled back fully, so making cleaning under it, and passing urine, difficult and painful. Phimosis also greatly increases the risk of penile cancer, and is a cause of foreskin and catheter problems in nursing homes.

- Reduces by 3-fold the risk of *inflammation* and *infection* of the skin of the penis. One in 10 uncircumcised men suffer from inflammation of the head of the penis and foreskin at some time in their lives. This rises to 1 in 3 if the uncircumcised man is diabetic. (Diabetic men also have other severe problems when uncircumcised.) In contrast only 2% of circumcised men experience such inflammation.
- Substantially reduces the risk of urinary tract infections and consequent renal complications.
- Over 20-fold decrease in risk of invasive *penile cancer*, which has a high fatality rate. One in 600 uncircumcised men get penile cancer, which often requires penile amputation or disfiguring surgery leading to impaired penile function.
- Significant studies suggest that uncircumcised men have 1½ – 2 times the risk of *prostate cancer*, which affects 1 in 6 men.
- Reduces by approximately 3- to 7-fold the risk of getting *HIV (AIDS)*, during sex with an infected woman. HIV enters via the vulnerable inner lining of the foreskin of a healthy penis, but can also infect via sores anywhere on the penis (caused for example by genital herpes, balanitis or inflammation). The man's risk, especially if uncircumcised,

will be greater if he engages in unsafe sex with individuals at high risk for HIV infection. Condoms should always be used irrespective of circumcision status

- Circumcision also affords substantial protection against thrush, as well as sexually transmitted infections such as *papilloma (wart) virus*, *syphilis* and *chancroid*.
- Circumcision reduces by up to 5 times the risk of the man's female partner being infected by *chlamydia* and, similarly, by 5 times the risk of her getting *cervical cancer* (which is caused by human papillomavirus). The load of infectious bacteria and viruses that accumulate under the foreskin is delivered into the female genital tract during sex. Chlamydia has more than doubled over the past 5 years and can cause *infertility* (in both sexes), *pelvic inflammatory disease*, and *ectopic pregnancy*.
- Up to 10% of males reaching adulthood uncircumcised will later require circumcision for medical reasons. Many are reluctant to go ahead with this or are incorrectly advised to 'put up' with the problem rather than have a circumcision. Early elective circumcision eliminates these problems before they occur.
- Credible research shows that most women prefer the *appearance* of the circumcised penis. They also prefer it for