

Intact America

Children's Rights

<https://www.intactamerica.org/category/voices-2/page/2/>

Campaign and Advocacy

Oct 15, 2021

R.F., a proud mother of 2 intact boys, is the first and only parent in her large Jewish family to keep her sons intact. The following is a letter she wrote to her cousins who were expecting a boy and had recently been persuaded by a mohel to go forward with the circumcision (despite their exposure to intactivism). The pressure to stay silent in a Jewish family is massive and intimidating, R.F. says. But I will continue to use my voice to advocate for these infant boys.

I am writing today because I need to do everything I can to convince you not to let your sons penis be permanently mutilated. I purposely did not use the word circumcised because that word hides and trivializes what it really is. Its a word we are used to as American Jews. But we are not used to looking deeply at the truth of it.

Yes, I am putting pressure on you, because I know infant genital cutting is wrong. Your mohel is wrong. Whatever she said to make you feel this is a good idea its wrong. If she said the baby wont feel pain she is wrong. If she said that its just a little snip she is wrong. If she said there are medical benefits she is wrong. If she said the risks for infection or complications are low she is wrong. If she said the baby will just go to sleep afterwards she is wrong (babies often go into shock and pass out in a traumatized state). If she said you need to do this to participate in the Jewish communityshe is wrong.

She has to believe these things because this is the life she has chosen for herself. But you do not have to buy into her mindset.

If she said this will make you part of a long-standing tradition she is right. But that long-standing tradition is one of abuse. You are too good for this. You have access to too much information to do this. Our parents (and theirs) did not have the Intact America and Your Whole Baby websites. They were much more insulated in a Jewish/American world without easy access to different ideas and different voices. When they find out and understand the truth, they can say We didnt know better. But you are different. You have the internet and the book about Brit Shalom, and articles and YouTube. You have me! You DO know better.

Female genital mutilation is condemned worldwide, and I am sure this makes sense to you. The baffling thing is how, at the same time, male genital mutilation is normalized and encouraged in America and in certain religions. It is the pinnacle of hypocrisy to look down on FGM but endorse MGM.

Imagine your daughter being strapped down by her wrists and ankles, and then someone taking a knife and cutting off her labia or clitoral hood. Take a moment and really picture it in your mind. What could possibly be the benefit of such a violent act? This is what you are considering doing to your eight-day-old son. Its not different because he is smaller or younger or because he is a boy. The clitoral hood is her foreskin. Its purpose is to protect her clitoris and maintain its sensitivity. The male foreskin is there to protect the glans of the penis, maintain its sensitivity and more. The male foreskin is live, sensory tissue that has a role in sexual function.

It might feel stressful to change the bris into a Brit Shalom so late in the process. People have expectations; maybe you even made a payment. But this is nothing compared to what it means for your baby to keep his foreskin and avoid a profound, painful, irreversible trauma. If you decide to cancel the genital cutting and change plans, I will drop everything to help you. I will make all the calls for you. You dont have to rush. You can cancel everything now and do a Brit Shalom when he is 1 month or 3 months or 5 months or 1 year. The well-being of your baby is all that matters.

You might be thinking, We are the parents, and it is our choice. But it is not parents prerogative to sacrifice their childs bodily integrity, to injure their children. They are not allowed to tattoo their children, or remove the foreskin of their daughters. The legality of infant boy genital cutting is a tragic loophole in our culture. What would you say if a religious leader or doctor suggested that you cut off your sons pinky finger on the 8th or 1st day of his life? It would be the most absurd thing you ever heard. This is the same. A child has a right to his whole body.

You might think that the event will be quick and then over. But it is not quick. It is forever. You will see your childs penis every single day for years. You will be reminded of what you allowed to be done to him. Or you can keep him whole, and you will see that his penis, with foreskin, is perfect and beautiful, as God and Nature made him. You will be so grateful that no one took a knife to it. And when he comes to know the sexual functions of his foreskin, he will thank you.

If you allow someone to cut your sons penis, what will you say to your son when he asks you why you chose to do this to him? What will you say when he finds out that a natural human penis has a foreskin, but his was removed? What if he feels it should have been his choice? This will affect your relationship with your son forever. It will affect his sex life forever. Yes, circumcised penises are also beautiful, as are all people and bodies no matter what we have been through. But cut men are survivors of unnecessary violence and loss. And our bodies remember even when our conscious brains do not.

You do not want to become regret parents. It is such a horrific thing to realize what you have done to your child but its too late. You are here now! You can make the right choice the fair and loving choice for your child, for your sweet boy, whose body is absolutely perfect just as it is.

I love you.

R.F.

Interested in lending your voice? [Send us an email](#), giving us a brief summary of what you would like to write about, and we will get back to you.

Sep 20, 2021



My story with circumcision began as most did: in infancy, when I was restrained against my will and mutilated. I grew up from that into a difficult child. I was easily angered and I clearly remember the more aggressive version of myself where I would hit people, not with any intention to hurt them, but just as an almost uncontrollable fit of rage. In addition to that, I had an incredible difficulty paying attention and would often get stuck in my learning. I was told I would have to be evaluated and medicated if I were to stay in school, and so, I was taken to doctors, therapists, psychiatrists and put on numerous medications so I would fit into society.

When I was around 5 years old, I found out about male genital mutilation when a friend of mine, who had an intact father, showed me his intact penis. One day, he showed me how he could roll back the foreskin to take out the glans and I instantly knew something was wrong with me since it was a natural-looking function that I could not replicate. Having found my father more difficult to deal with in those years, I went to my mother and confronted her about it. Not knowing what circumcision meant, she had to explain to me rather bluntly that they had the doctors cut off that extra skin and that it was her idea because it was cleaner.

Cut it off? How dare they? It seemed so perfectly suited in both form and function, and the shiny glans in particular looked a lot better than what I had. I asked her if it could grow back and she replied it wont. I punched her in the shoulder as hard as my little fist could in a fit of rage. This seemed to upset her, but not enough for her to admit she had done anything wrong. Instead, she suggested it was a boy thing and that I should speak to my psychiatrist which I didnt.

Eventually, when I was growing up in middle school, I had yet another problem with my genitals. I had what felt like a bag full of swollen worms drooping down by my left testicle. Not trusting doctors or my parents, I waited a year or two before telling them. When I did finally see a urologist, it turns out I had a varicocele which, if not operated on, might prevent me from having kids by bringing too much heat into the scrotum, crippling production of sperm. To this day, Im still not sure if there is a correlation between the varicocele and my violent circumcision. Not wanting another doctor near my genitals, but realizing the implications I consented and had a nervous breakdown the day of the procedure, talking a thousand miles per hour until I finally calmed down.

Ive remained on medication to manage anxiety and depression, have had numerous sleep issues, nausea, and other stomach problems that went with all that, some of which made it difficult if not impossible to perform my job on certain days. Also, I would have existential crises and thought about ending my life more than once so I would be in a better place, or maybe have better luck being reborn into a family that wouldnt mutilate me so I could experience a proper life as an intact male. I think often of how much more I could be capable of both at work and in my personal life if I didnt have the internal turmoil to fight with or the drain in self-confidence holding me back.

Circumcised infants create dysfunctional children and adults in more ways than American society and the world realizes. Without a shadow of a doubt, I am sure that my psychological problems were caused in large part by MGM. Nobody should be denied the right to be intact, no matter their race, religion, gender, or country of origin. Right now in the world, being intact is a privilege that comes from the stars aligning to put you in the right family or being born into fortuitous situations that spare you what can be a lifetime of pain. It is my hope in sharing this story that readers can understand just how bad circumcision really is and refuse it for their children so they dont have to go through the problems I did. Trust me when I say from experience that this procedure often billed as just a quick snip can permanently ruin lives.

Becoming a dedicated intactivist at a young age I made a promise to myself to do whatever I could to speak out against this procedure and try and turn the trajectory of a society that had been culturally conditioned against neonatal ethics and male bodily integrity. While I had known about Intact America for a while it was seeing Sarah Zeimet or Mom4Intact as she is known on Twitter coming forward with her story that finally inspired me to have courage to do the same. It is my hope that the United States of America can join Europe and the rest of the intact western world in rejecting circumcision and realizing that knives and surgical instruments have no place near baby boys or young mens penises.

Brad Christensen

Interested in lending your voice? [Send us an email](#), giving us a brief summary of what you would like to write about, and we will get back to you.

Aug 6, 2021

One Happy Family, drawn by Robert Johnson

Several years ago a young Hispanic couple moved into temporary housing in our neighbors basement in Northern Virginia. Neither my

wife nor I had a chance to speak to the couple in the first few days after they moved in, but one morning I noticed that the very pregnant young woman was leaning against their pick-up truck across the street, holding her bulging abdomen as if fearful she might give birth any moment. I decided to introduce myself and asked if she was having a boy or girl. She looked at me sadly and said, A BOY! I said Wonderful! Are you going to have him in a hospital? She looked at me desperately. Yes, but I worry because they want him circumcised. My mother says No! And I dont want it too. But nurses at the hospital keep saying He is in America now! You should let a doctor circumcise him to keep him healthy and be like American boys.'

You are right to say No!' I said. It isnt necessary to circumcise him and it is harmful. The hospital people are wrong.

I would have him with my mothers help in her trailer, she said, but he is so big I worry if there could be a problem with birth!

Well, the hospital has to get your informed consent to circumcise. You have the right to say No. No one can make you say Yes. And circumcision will harm your baby. I know because Im circumcised and it harmed me. If you could wait a minute, I can get you some information to show the hospital that you have the right to say No!'

I ran into our house, turned on my computer, looked up Intact America, and found a statement in both English and Spanish explaining that circumcision is unnecessary and harmful to a baby and mustnt be performed without the parents informed consent. I printed the statement, dashed across the street, and gave it to the woman. She read the Spanish version eagerly and said, Thank you! I will show it to my mother and take this to hospital. Gracias! She took the paper, eased herself into the drivers seat, and drove off.

For several days I didnt see either the woman or her husband. Then one morning I noticed the familiar truck parking across the street. Eager for news, I rushed outside. The young woman, much thinner now, opened the passenger door and got out carrying a large, healthy-looking baby boy. Before I said a word, a short, older woman, who turned out to be the young womans mother, scurried around her daughter, beaming, and said, Thank you, sir! My grandbaby is happy baby boy! The young mother also thanked me and added, At hospital they ask me Are you SUUURE you dont want him circumcised? I said, Yes! I am sure! They ask this NINE TIMES! And I say, Yes, I am sure! nine times. And when we show them the paper you gave me they at last agree not to circumcise my big little boy. As the mother, grandmother, and baby got back in the truck, I noticed the womans husband giving me a thumbs-up and a smile before the family drove off.

I never saw this family again. I learned the next day that they had moved to another temporary home in a different part of the county. Knowing the baby was born in an American hospital and that to some degree my own intervention helped prevent his being circumcised made me happy for a while, but not so happy as to prevent an all-too-familiar, deeper, darker feeling from nudging its way back into consciousness.

I was not so lucky when I was born in Methodist Hospital in Peoria, Illinois in 1945. My father, who knew very well that my mother might be giving birth to a baby boy within a few days, decided to go on a business trip to Milwaukee, Wisconsin instead of playing an important supportive role on my mothers and my behalf. Years later, my mother told me she never forgave him for leaving her, forcing her to depend on a neighbor to take her to the hospital when it was time for me to be born. Four years earlier, hed taken her to the hospital when my brother was born, so why did my father go on a needless business trip on the important occasion of my birth? As it happened, I was born at 3:30 in the morning from a sedated mother, attended to by a doctor, then whisked away to a maternity ward. As far as I know, the attending doctor circumcised me that very night, bandaged me up, and sent me to a maternity ward to cry myself to sleep if I slept at all.

I would say I have no conscious memory of that night, but that is not entirely true. Sixty years later, while practicing primal therapy exercises on my own at home, part of a decades-long quest to uncover the sources of life-long feelings of anxiety, inadequacy, depression, terror, and rage, I suddenly felt a sharp cutting sensation around the shaft of my penis. I stopped the exercise immediately as I realized the sensation was my bodys way of telling me that I was re-experiencing my infant circumcision in 1945.

Why had my father, who was born in rural Indiana in 1907 and left intact, chosen to be away on a business trip rather than to take steps to protect me from the circumcision that, without strong intervention, was sure to happen to me after I was born in 1945? I could only guess, since my father was no longer living, that it was because he was caught off guard when my older brother was circumcised in a hospital four years earlier. My father was a first-born child when he was born and always seemed, like many fathers of his era, to place special concern on the welfare of his first-born son. I may be wrong, but I strongly suspect he couldnt allow his second-born son, by NOT being circumcised, to have an advantage in life over his first-born son. Could this explain his mysterious decision to go on a business trip at this special time?

Of course, Ill never know for sure, but I do believe that was the case, and I suspect that my strong feelings about the wrongness of allowing an infant boy to be traumatized and sexually wounded by circumcision may be what prompted me to run out of my familys house toward a distressed, very pregnant stranger to do whatever I could to help a baby boy have a happier life than mine had been.

Robert Clover Johnson

Interested in lending your voice? [Send us an email](#),giving us a brief summary of what you would like to write about, and we will get back to you.

Aug 6, 2021

I was first introduced to circumcision and became aware that it happened to me when I was almost eleven years old. Immediately, it bothered me that someone changed something about my penis when I was a baby and could not give my permission. I rediscovered the topic years later when I found material on the internet that talked about the horrors of infant circumcision, its impact on sexual pleasure, and its human rights implications.

I feel betrayed by the doctor who mutilated my penis when I was a helpless newborn.

I want to feel complete, and that means living with the genitals I was born with. I shouldn't have to settle for anything less. No one had the right to take that from me. At twenty years old, I cannot escape this obsessive epiphany.

Circumcision is a lifelong intrusion on my body and an imposition on my sexuality. My foreskin is a permanent loss which I will always grieve. I deal with feelings of brokenness and inadequacy, and I am jealous of those who were fortunate enough to have been spared this disfiguring surgery. Circumcision harmed my body image by limiting my capacity for sexual, emotional and aesthetic satisfaction. My genitals are tainted with feelings of grief, anger, and despair. The missing foreskin and the physical scar on my penis are daily reminders. The mental scar is not as outwardly apparent; yet both will stay with me for the rest of my life.

I cannot see myself other than as being mutilated. The erogenous tissue and its nerve endings will never come back. My sensitive frenar band is almost completely missing. My glans is keratinised and desensitised because my foreskins is not there to protect it. Circumcision has created an unnatural need for artificial lubricant. I am not the same person I would have been had my genitals not been cut.

I feel betrayed by the institutions that had a responsibility to protect me. North American regulatory bodies have staved off recognition of the harms of circumcision and the truth about the culturally-biased policies that perpetuate it. Honesty about the problems of neonatal circumcision could threaten the credibility of the medical establishment, by exposing its systemic wrongdoing, the false rationales promoting circumcision, and the stubborn tenacity of the practice that has harmed so many.

The trauma flowing from my forced circumcision has resulted in anxiety, unspecified obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress, and an eating disorder. Obsession and rumination about circumcision causes me uneasiness, intrusive thoughts, irritability, and insomnia. I have an intense discomfort and sensitivity regarding the subject of circumcision, yet I can't stop thinking about it. It's a problem I cannot fix and it doesn't fade over time: every time I look down, the circumcision scar is still there and it will never go away.

Regardless of whether a given individual realizes it, the physical harms occur to everyone who is forcibly circumcised as an infant. The psychological harm, though, becomes apparent under certain conditions, depending on the information received and individuals specific personality traits. For me, perhaps the traits that amplify the intensity of the psychological harm caused by my genital cutting include my pensive and sensitive nature; my concern about injustice; my tendency to feel strongly about sensitive issues; and my perfectionistic disposition. But the problem is not my personality—the problem is what happened to me. The cause of my pain is the injury inflicted on me as a child. From a legal perspective, perpetrators of an assault must take their victims as they find them. It is the harmful action, after all, that causes the damage.

A few things help me to cope. I started seeing a counsellor who understands the harms of genital cutting and is working with me to find healing strategies. I also began seeing a psychiatrist, who has prescribed an anti-anxiety medication that lowers the intensity of my obsessive thoughts and helps me feel less overwhelmed about the problem. It also has been immensely helpful to have a network of trusted friends and activists on whom I can lean. Activism is an important avenue of my healing. I speak out about male genital cutting to inform laypeople and the medical community and raise awareness about this medical malpractice.

I filed a complaint with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario directed at the doctor who mutilated me, outlining the harms, rights violations, and lack of consent associated with my circumcision. I was met with a lazy dismissal and an ignorance of the problems I presented. The Inquiries Complaints and Reports Committee avoided addressing the harms, ethical problems, and lack of consent on both personal and systemic levels. They relied on fallacious reasoning and deflections, defending circumcision because it is accepted by many. The Committee claimed that it satisfies the standard of care even though it is absurd to describe forced genital cutting as care. The CPSO is unprepared to face the ugly truth. Instead, it tacitly approves and enables the practice while avoiding accountability.

The complaint process was worth it, however. Every complaint matters in the fight for bodily integrity for all. I am escalating my complaint to the Health Professions Appeal and Review Board. I don't expect responsiveness, yet I will do my best to confront them with the necessity of decisive action. I also plan to approach the Ontario Human Rights Commission and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada about infant genital cutting in Canada.

Finally, I have initiated a lawsuit against the doctor and hospital responsible for my mutilation. It will be a long, uphill battle but I have confidence in the merits of my case and my quest for justice. I am glad for the opportunity to demonstrate to the Canadian court that infant male genital cutting is a rights violation and that doctors should be held accountable for performing harmful, unnecessary surgeries on children and took seriously their obligation to act only in the best interests of their infant patients.

Readers wishing to know more about A.L.'s pursuit of institutional and legal remedies may contact him at [\[emailprotected\]](mailto:).

Interested in lending your voice? [Send us an email](#), giving us a brief summary of what you would like to write about, and we will get back to you.

May 4, 2021



Hello my name is Sarah, I am 29 years old, I have 2 healthy children (2 & 4), and I was born and raised in Wisconsin which is where we currently reside.

Both of my pregnancies were healthy and full term, my second was a boy. We didnt find out gender until birth so when I saw an anti circumcision post on Facebook, the question arose in my head if we had a boy; would we be circumcising?

At this point in time, I had thought it was just something you do, I didnt know why, but instincts were telling me no. I had no hesitation to ask my husband, I was assuming the answer would be yes and I would maybe ignorantly forget about it like most do. However, when I asked him if we have a boy, will we circumcise him? and the answer was a quick and simple no, not necessary, I felt a great relief. But little did I know the obstacles we would face in the process of bringing home an intact newborn boy in America.

In the following weeks until our green-gendered-baby-turned-blue was earthside, I did a lot of research on circumcision, the foreskin, and the intact penis in general. We were asked by family if we would be circumcising him, and when our answer was no, we faced a lot of backlash. I was asked by my ob/gyn if we would circumcise if it were a boy, and I said no. No further questions were asked.

It wasnt until our perfect baby boy was born on March 19th 2020 that I would I be asked no fewer than four times in a single day if we had decided on circumcision. Nobody offered any explanation further of the procedure, or any information on leaving my son whole. Although I had just learned about all of this 6 weeks prior and I was still unsure, my answer was repeatedly no, only to hear a mumbling reply about cleanliness, parental preference, and UTI prevention.

The last time they came in looking to take our son, instead of asking they barged in and exclaimed Okay and it looks like hes ready for his circumcision! I banged back with a I SAID NO THANK YOU! and the nurse turned around and walked out of the room. If I hadnt been on guard, they would have tricked me into it.

We made it home with our son in one piece, but the way the hospital harassed me about circumcision made me feel bad about my whole birthing experience. I spent the whole time watching my son like a hawk, terrified they were going to sneak my baby to a circumstraint board.

Today our son is 2 years old and perfectly healthy. He has never had a single foreskin problem to-date, and I have never been prouder of not only a parenting decision, but for my husband coming forward and making sure we broke the cycle with our son. Intact America is just one of the many fantastic organizations that I have been honored to come across in my journey to help educate others about the harms of circumcision, benefits of staying intact, and the importance of bodily autonomy.

Sarah Zeimet

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Apr 28, 2021

I've never actually said, though have thought it many times, how I will never be able to truly explain just how much circumcision has hurt me. Though there be days of respite, not many go by that I do not at some point reflect on: feelings of loss for what I once had but will never know; despair over my powerlessness as a young child, as others made unnecessary choices for my genitals; and hopelessness in realizing so few people will ever listen, whether for me or for the sake of future generations.

To be sure, I now live with it more easily than in years past. I first looked into circumcision at age 13. I recall contemplating giving up sexuality entirely so I could obviate the pain. I soon started practicing foreskin restoration yet even the slightest hiccup so often led me to give it up. Any difficulties there just magnified the despair. I made many New Years resolutions to continue with it, and to this day, a couple decades later, I still have progress to make.

Its better to be knowledgeable than ignorant though. Over the years I accepted my personal truth and worked to confront my feelings. Reading claims of how wonderful circumcision is made me so angry. Writing things to hand out to prospective parents, classmates, strangers at the mall often left me in tears. I continued trying restoration. All never to hide, never to deny. For my efforts, and I suppose with the passage of time, I indeed live with it all more easily these days.

But the truth and the hurt never truly go away. How possibly could they? Nothing can ever actually undo what was done to me. I will never have the complete, proper penis that I was born with. All my would-be private, intimate moments have forever been touched by others. You cannot fully shake off such things or, at least, I know not how. Perhaps other people who have dealt with personal violations have found ways to heal. I have not.

In the last several years, I have been on and off with it all. For stretches of time, it can all still be too much, too heavy to actively bear. I have been keeping up with restoration fairly consistently, and I have been reaching out to more people on the subject. And it gives me such joy to see everything that a group like Intact America is doing, knowing that there are people like Georganne Chapin who for decades have been speaking and fighting for men like me.

Ignorant attitudes and beliefs on the subject have to change. A foreskin is not merely just skin. The anatomy is more complicated than that. Circumcision radically alters a penis. Assuming someone circumcised as a boy will grow up happy and content, and failing to consider how hurt they could later feel having had part of their genitals judged as valueless show presumptuous. This incessant ignoring and denying of the subject causes such hurt and pain. How shameful.

My hope for change is quite muddled. It does seem so hopeless at times; circumcision has persisted for so many decades with so few caring to listen, contemplate or change. I know firsthand how very painful confronting it all can be. For each man like me, there is another, or a parent or a nurse or a doctor, women and men and people of faith. No one touched by circumcision walks away unharmed once they realize the damage and heartache it causes. Heres to hoping all the pain today will turn to bliss tomorrow when children are spared the same fate

Darren Olsen

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