



How to Care for Your Baby's Penis

The Circumcised Penis

If you chose to have your son circumcised ([/English/ages-stages/prenatal/decisions-to-make/Pages/Circumcision.aspx](#)), the procedure likely performed in the hospital before discharge, but is sometimes done afterward. Ritual circumcisions for religious reasons are usually performed in the second week after birth.

After the procedure, a light dressing with petroleum jelly will have been placed over the head of the penis. The next time the baby urinates, this dressing usually will come off. Some pediatricians recommend keeping a clean dressing over the area until the penis is fully healed, while others advise leaving it off. The important thing is to keep the area as clean. If stool gets on the penis, wipe it gently.



What to expect

The tip of the penis may look red for the first few days, and you may notice a yellow secretion. Both mean that the area is healing normally. The redness and secretion disappear gradually within a week.

When to call the pediatrician

If the redness persists or there is swelling or crusted yellow sores, there may be an infection. This does not happen often, but if you suspect an infection, consult your pediatrician.

After the circumcision has healed:

Usually, after the circumcision has healed, the penis requires no additional care. Occasionally a small piece of the foreskin remains. You should pull back this skin gently each time the child is bathed. Examine the groove around the head of the penis and make sure it's clean.

Note: If circumcision is desired but is not performed within the baby's first two weeks (perhaps for medical reasons), it is usually put off for several weeks or months. The follow-up care is the same whenever it is done. Should circumcision become necessary after the newborn period, general anesthesia is often used and requires a more formal surgical procedure with control of bleeding and suturing of skin edges.

The Uncircumcised Penis

In the first few months, you should simply clean and bathe your baby's uncircumcised penis ([/English/ages-stages/baby/bathing-skin-care/Pages/Care-for-an-Uncircumcised-Penis.aspx](#)), like the rest of the diaper area. Initially, the foreskin is connected by tissue to the glans, or head, of the penis, so you shouldn't try to retract it. No cleansing of the penis with cotton swabs or antiseptics is necessary.

The doctor will tell you when the foreskin has separated and can be retracted safely. This will not be for several months or years, and should never be forced; if you force the foreskin to retract before it is ready, you could cause painful bleeding and tears in the skin. After this separation occurs, retract the foreskin occasionally to gently cleanse the end of the penis.

What to do as your son gets older:

As your son gets older, you'll need to teach him what he must do in order to urinate and wash his penis. Teach him to clean his foreskin by:

- Gently pulling it back away from the head of the penis.
- Rinsing the head of the penis and inside fold of the foreskin.

- Pulling the foreskin back over the head of the penis.

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