



Home → Health Topics → Circumcision

URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/circumcision.html>

## Circumcision

### What is circumcision?

Circumcision is a surgical procedure to remove the foreskin from the penis. The foreskin is the loose skin that covers the tip of the penis. In the United States, circumcision is often done before a new baby leaves the hospital.

### What should I consider when deciding whether to have my baby circumcised?

As parents, it is your decision whether to have your baby circumcised. When making your decision, you should consider your own religious, cultural, and personal preferences, as well as the medical benefits and risks. You can discuss these with your baby's health care provider before you make a decision.

### What are the medical benefits of circumcision?

The possible medical benefits of circumcision include:

- A lower risk of HIV [<https://medlineplus.gov/hiv.html>] and some other sexually transmitted infections [<https://medlineplus.gov/sexuallytransmittedinfections.html>] (STIs).
- A slightly lower risk of urinary tract infections [<https://medlineplus.gov/urinarytractinfections.html>] (UTIs) during the first year of life and penile cancer later in life. However, these conditions are rare in all males (circumcised or not).
- Prevention of certain penile problems, such as foreskin infections and phimosis, a condition in which the foreskin can't be retracted (pulled back).
- Easier hygiene.

### What are the risks of circumcision?

The risks of circumcision include:

- A low risk of bleeding, infection, or scarring.
- A very low risk of having too much or not enough skin cut off.
- Pain. You can ask the health care provider to put a numbing medicine on your baby's penis to lessen the pain.

These risks are higher when circumcision is performed on older babies, boys, and men.

### What else do I need to know about circumcision?

Premature babies [<https://medlineplus.gov/prematurebabies.html>] and babies born with health problems should not be circumcised until they are healthy.

If have your baby circumcised, ask their provider how to care for the penis as it heals.

If your baby does not get circumcised, their provider can teach you how to keep your baby's penis clean. It's important to know that a newborn's foreskin may not retract completely. Over time, it retracts on its own.

## Start Here

- Circumcision [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/circumcision.html>]  (Nemours Foundation)  
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/circumcision.html>]
- Circumcision (Male) [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/circumcision/about/pac-20393550?p=1>]  
(Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/tests-procedures/circumcision/about/pac-20393550?adfree=true&p=1>]

## Related Issues

- Care for an Uncircumcised Penis: What Parents Need to Know [<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/bathing-skin-care/pages/Care-for-an-Uncircumcised-Penis.aspx>] (American Academy of Pediatrics)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.healthychildren.org/spanish/ages-stages/baby/bathing-skin-care/paginas/care-for-an-uncircumcised-penis.aspx>]
- Should the Baby Be Circumcised? [<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/prenatal/decisions-to-make/Pages/Should-the-Baby-be-Circumcised.aspx>] (American Academy of Pediatrics)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.healthychildren.org/spanish/ages-stages/prenatal/decisions-to-make/paginas/should-the-baby-be-circumcised.aspx>]

## Images

- Circumcision - series [[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100081\\_1.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100081_1.htm)] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [[https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp\\_presentations/100081\\_1.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100081_1.htm)]

## Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Circumcision [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?intr=circumcision&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  
 (National Institutes of Health)

## Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Investigating the Factors Influencing Traditional Male Circumcision and Its Contribution to... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40724060>]
- Article: Avoidance of Circumcision during the Phallic Stage: Myth or Reality? [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40495493>]
- Article: Neonatal Circumcision Simulation: A Resource for Beginners. [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40463433>]
- Circumcision -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Circumcision%2C+Male%22%5Bmajr%3Aexp%5D+AND+male+%5Bmh%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bdat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

## Find an Expert

- Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/>]   
Also in Spanish [<https://espanol.nichd.nih.gov/>]

## Patient Handouts

- Circumcision [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002998.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/002998.htm>]



## MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

[Circumcision](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002998.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002998.htm>]

[Circumcision - series](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100081_1.htm) [[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100081\\_1.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100081_1.htm)]

[Penis care \(uncircumcised\)](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001917.htm) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001917.htm>]

## National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Circumcision* is the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/Pages/index.aspx>]

## Other Languages

Find health information in languages other than English [<https://medlineplus.gov/languages/circumcision.html>] on *Circumcision*

MedlinePlus links to health information from the National Institutes of Health and other federal government agencies. MedlinePlus also links to health information from non-government Web sites. See our [disclaimer](#) [<https://medlineplus.gov/disclaimers.html>] about external links and our [quality guidelines](#) [<https://medlineplus.gov/criteria.html>] .

The information on this site should not be used as a substitute for professional medical care or advice. Contact a health care provider if you have questions about your health.

[Learn how to cite this page](#)