



York and Scarborough  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Having a Circumcision

Information for patients, relatives and carers

① For more information, please contact:  
please contact the hospital where you are being treated:

For York Hospital:

Day Unit

Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm

Telephone: 01904 726010

For Scarborough/Bridlington Hospitals:

Urology Nurse Practitioners Telephone: 01723 385246

Urology Secretaries Telephone: 01723 342437

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# What is a circumcision?

Circumcision is the removal of the foreskin of the penis. In adults the operation is usually performed for medical reasons, for example, if the foreskin is too tight.

You will usually have your circumcision as a day patient, where the intention is to go home the same day, though you may spend several hours in the hospital.

The doctors and nurses are there to help you. They will always make time to listen to you and answer your questions. If you do not fully understand anything about your circumcision, please ask.

**If you become ill or cannot keep your appointment for any reason, please tell us as early as possible so that another patient can be offered treatment. We will rearrange your appointment.**

For York Hospital patients:  
01904 726518 or 01904 725542

For Scarborough/Bridlington Hospitals patients:  
01723 346243 or 01723 342078

It is important that you telephone us **before** your procedure if you have any of the following:

- A regular prescription for blood-thinners. Examples include warfarin, clopidogrel (Plavix), rivaroxaban (Xarelto), dabigatran (Pradaxa), edoxaban or apixaban (Eliquis).
- An artificial heart valve
- A coronary artery stent
- A pacemaker or defibrillator
- A previous or current MRSA infection
- A high risk of variant-CJD (if you have received a corneal transplant, a neurosurgical dural transplant or previous injections of human-derived growth hormone).

**Our contact numbers are:**

For York Hospital patients:  
01904 726518 or 01904 725707

For Scarborough/Bridlington Hospitals patients:  
01723 342437

# **What are the alternatives to a circumcision?**

Observation (no treatment).

The application of steroid cream to the foreskin can be effective in a proportion of cases.

A number of minor plastic surgical procedures are available for the adult non-retractable foreskin, of which prepuceplasty is the most popular. This procedure has less impact and fewer complications than circumcision and allows the foreskin to be retained, but may not fully resolve the problem.

Your surgeon will have discussed alternative treatments with you in outpatients.

# **What kind of anaesthetic will I have?**

You may have a local or a general anaesthetic.

If local anaesthetic alone is used, you will be awake for the procedure and the penis will be numbed by an injection at the base of the penis. The advantages of this approach are less anaesthetic risk, a quick simple recovery and no need to be accompanied at home afterwards. It may be particularly appropriate if other health conditions raise concern regarding risk of general anaesthetic.

If general anaesthesia is used, you will be put to sleep for the operation. You should still be able to go home the same day, but we'll ask that you don't drive, cycle or use public transport home and have someone accompany you at home. A local anaesthetic will often be used in addition to minimise post-operative pain.

Your doctor will usually have discussed your anaesthetic with you in the outpatient clinic.

If you are having a general anaesthetic, you should also be given a leaflet that contains more information about your anaesthetic.

You may be given an antibiotic either by mouth or injectable before the procedure, after checking for any allergies.

# What should I expect before the procedure?

You will usually be admitted on the same day as your surgery. If your procedure is under a general anaesthetic (where you will be asleep throughout the procedure) then you will normally receive an appointment for pre-assessment to assess your general fitness and to perform some baseline investigations. After admission, you will be seen by members of the medical team which may include the consultant, specialist registrar, foundation doctor and a staff nurse.

If you require an overnight stay, you will also need to bring your:

- usual medication,
- nightwear, slippers and toiletries.

You may be asked not to eat or drink for six hours before surgery and, immediately before the operation, you may be given a pre-medication by the anaesthetist which will make you dry-mouthed and pleasantly sleepy. Either way your admission letter will tell you if you can have breakfast before you arrive at the hospital.

At some stage during the admission process, you will be asked to sign the second part of the consent form (FYCON76-1 Circumcision (Adult) giving permission for your operation to take place, showing you understand what is to be done and confirming that you wish to proceed. Make sure that you are given the opportunity to discuss any concerns and to ask any questions you may still have before signing the form.

## **What happens before my circumcision?**

You are asked to change into a theatre gown and one of our dressing gowns. You may prefer to bring your own but it must be clean as you are going into an operating theatre area.

You will be taken to the operating theatre where your identity is checked as part of the safety procedures.



# **What happens during my circumcision operation?**

If you are having a local anaesthetic, the surgeon uses a very thin needle to inject anaesthetic, which numbs the area before the operation begins.

If your circumcision is being performed under general anaesthetic, then your surgeon will also inject local anaesthetic into the penis so you will have very little immediate pain. This also makes it much less sore over the post-operative period.

The foreskin will be removed using an incision just behind the head of the penis. This leaves the head of the penis completely exposed. You will be left with dissolving stitches where the skin has been removed. A small amount of redundant skin may be left to allow comfortable erections, leaving a fold of skin where the foreskin has been removed. Some scarring is inevitable and post-operative appearance may not be exactly as you anticipate but every effort will be made to leave a satisfactory cosmetic result.

# **Are there any risks in having a circumcision?**

Most procedures have a potential for side-effects. You should be reassured that, although all these complications are well-recognised, the majority of patients do not suffer any problems after a urological procedure.

## **Common (Greater than 1 in 10)**

- Swelling of the penis lasting several days.

## **Occasional (Between 1 in 10 and 1 in 50)**

- Bleeding of the wound occasionally needing a further procedure.
- Infection of the incision requiring further treatment or casualty visit.
- Permanent, altered or reduced sensation in the head of the penis.
- Persistence of absorbable stitches after three to four weeks requiring removal.

## **Rare (Less than 1 in 50)**

- Scar tenderness (rarely long term).
- Failure to be completely satisfied with the cosmetic result.
- Occasional need for removal of excessive skin at a later date.
- Permission for biopsy of abnormal area on head of the penis if malignancy is a concern.

## **Hospital-acquired infection**

- Colonisation with MRSA (0.9% - 1 in 110)
- Clostridium Difficile bowel infection (0.2% - 1 in 500)
- MRSA bloodstream infection (0.08% - 1 in 1250).

## **What happens after my circumcision?**

You are taken to the recovery area where a nurse will check your progress. When the nurse is happy with your recovery, you will be returned to your trolley or bed in the ward area. If you have had a general anaesthetic, you will be offered a drink when you are able to sit up.

## **How will I feel after my circumcision?**

You will have some soreness and swelling for a day or two. Any discomfort should be controlled with simple painkillers, for example, paracetamol.

In the first few days following this operation, some patients have difficulty passing urine. Drinking plenty of fluids will help this problem.

Absorbable stitches are normally used which do not require removal.

Vaseline should be applied to the tip of the penis and around the stitch line to prevent the penis from adhering to your underclothes and it is advisable to wear light clothing for two to three days. Passing urine will be painless and will not be affected by the operation.

The average hospital stay is less than one day.

## **When can I go home?**

Following a general anaesthetic you will be able to go home with an adult who can look after you when it is felt you are ready. You may leave the hospital unaccompanied after a local anaesthetic. If you are an inpatient, you will usually stay in hospital for one night. Your surgeon will discuss your operation with you before you go home.

If you have had a general anaesthetic, you must not drive yourself home, cycle or use public transport. If you have had a local anaesthetic, you are advised not to drive or cycle home, as you may feel faint.

## **Before you leave the hospital**

A nurse will go through the discharge instructions with you and tell you about the care you need at home.

Please ask if you are unsure of any of the instructions.

# **What should I do if I have any problems or worries about my circumcision after going home?**

During the first 24 hours after your operation please contact the hospital or ward where you have received treatment:

York Hospital Wards:

|                              |              |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| Day Unit between 8am and 5pm | 01904 726010 |
| Ward 14 between 5pm and 8am  | 01904 726014 |

Scarborough/Bridlington Hospital Wards:

|                          |              |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| Maple Ward (Scarborough) | 01723 236261 |
| Lilac Ward (Scarborough) | 01723 342805 |
| Ash Ward (Scarborough)   | 01723 385220 |
| Lloyd Ward (Bridlington) | 01262 423134 |

If you have continuing problems and need further advice please contact your Urology Specialist Nurse or Nurse Practitioner (see contact numbers on the front cover) or your GP.

# **Instructions and advice when you leave hospital**

## **Can I bath or shower when I get home?**

You may bath or shower as usual. The first time you bath or shower at home you may feel light-headed or faint. You are advised to leave the bathroom door unlocked and arrange for someone to check that you are safe. Do not soak your wound or apply talcum powder and deodorants to it. Pat it dry with a clean towel.

## **When can I resume my usual activities?**

Moderate activity following your circumcision will help your recovery. It will help to prevent blood clots forming in your legs. Walking is good exercise. There are no restrictions on your leisure, sporting or domestic activities as long as you feel well enough to do them.

## **When can I have sex again?**

You should refrain from sexual intercourse for a minimum of four weeks.

## **When can I drive again?**

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are fit to drive following your surgery. You do not normally need to notify the DVLA unless you have a medical condition that will last for longer than three months after your surgery and may affect your ability to drive. Therefore, you will be able to drive when it is comfortable for you to sit for a period, and you have a free range of movement. You must be able to perform an emergency stop. You should, however, check with your insurance company before returning to driving. Your doctors will be happy to provide you with advice on request.

## **When can I go back to work?**

It will be at least 10 days before healing occurs and you may return to work when you are comfortable enough and your GP is satisfied with your progress. Most people require at least a week off work.

## **What else should I look out for?**

There will be marked swelling of the penis after a few days. This will last three to four days and will then subside but do not be alarmed because this is expected. However, if you develop a temperature, increased redness, uncontrolled bleeding, throbbing or drainage at the site of the operation, please contact your GP.



## **Are there any other important points?**

You will not normally be given a follow-up outpatient appointment after circumcision unless this is felt necessary by your consultant.

# Who can I contact for more help or information?

For further information on the internet, here are some useful sites to explore:

British Association of Urological Surgeons  
("I'm told I need a....." section) [www.baus.org.uk](http://www.baus.org.uk)

Best Health (prepared by the British Medical Association) [www.besthealth.co.uk](http://www.besthealth.co.uk)

NICE – National Institute of Health and Care Excellence  
(Nice CKS service) [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

NHS: Home  
[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

Patient UK  
<https://patient.info/>

Royal College of Anaesthetists  
(for information about anaesthetics) [www.rcoa.ac.uk](http://www.rcoa.ac.uk)

Royal College of Surgeons (patient information section)  
[www.rcseng.ac.uk](http://www.rcseng.ac.uk)

## **Tell us what you think of this leaflet**

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

Mr. B Blake-James, Consultant Urological Surgeon,  
The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE or  
telephone 01904 725985

## **Teaching, training and research**

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net).

An answer phone is available out of hours.

# Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:

[www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/](http://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/)

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