



York and Scarborough  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Circumcision for children

Information for patients, relatives and carers

## Department of Urology

① For more information, please contact:

Paediatric Nurses

Telephone: 01904 726010

Ward 17

Telephone: 01904 726017

York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE

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# **What is circumcision?**

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

The operation is usually performed as a day patient when your child will usually spend a few hours at the hospital.

This leaflet explains a little about what will happen to your child before, during and after their operation. It tries to answer some of the questions you may have.

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

# **What happens before the operation?**

You will have an appointment in a Pre-Assessment clinic. You will meet a nurse and a member of the play team. The nurse will ask medical questions and check the child's height and weight. The play team will discuss the anaesthetic to help you and the child understand it more. You will have the opportunity to ask any questions and be given some information to take home.

Please ensure you have some simple painkillers at home for after the operation, for example Calpol. If you are not sure what to buy, check with any pharmacy.

At some stage before or during the admission process, you will be asked to sign the second part of the consent form (FY03CON68-2 Circumcision (child) giving permission for the operation to take place, showing you understand what is to be done and confirming that you wish to proceed. The child can also sign the form if they wish. 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 on the day of the operation?

You will have a letter that tells you either to go to Day Ward or Ward 17. These are both paediatric areas. The nurse will meet you and settle you into the ward. They will do some checks and give the child a name band. The doctor will explain the operation in more detail, discuss any worries you may have and ask you to sign a consent form. An anaesthetist will also see you to explain the child's anaesthetic in more detail. If the child has any medical problems or allergies, please tell the doctors.

The child can wear their own clothes to aid comfort. We recommend bringing loose comfortable clothing with no metalwork or zips. The ward can be quite warm.

After the operation the child will recover on the Day Ward or Ward 17. They need to stay a **minimum** of two hours on the ward but quite often they may need to stay longer. They can have a drink and then something to eat. We will ensure they have enough painkillers. We also like them to go to the toilet and pass urine before they go home.

If the child takes any regular medication, please bring this with you on the day of the operation.

## **What does the operation involve?**

Your child will have a general anaesthetic. This means they will be asleep during their circumcision. The anaesthetist will speak to you before their circumcision to discuss any concerns you may have and to check when they last had something to eat and drink.

The surgeon will also inject a local anaesthetic into the base of the penis to numb it. This will make it more comfortable for your child after the operation.

The surgeon trims the foreskin and inserts small dissolving stitches into the edges of the wound which may be supplemented with tissue glue.

## **What happens after the operation?**

The child will benefit from extra rest for a couple of days. It is best to keep the child off school or nursery for two to three days. Please give painkillers according to the instructions on the packet to help ease pain. Sitting on toys or bicycles should be avoided until the wound has healed. Sporting activities such as PE and swimming can be restarted after two weeks.

Following the operation, the wound should be kept clean and dry for 8 hours. The stitches are usually dissolvable and do not require removal. Bathing too early may cause the stitches to dissolve too quickly so we recommend quick washes for the first week after the operation.

You and the child may have an outpatient appointment several weeks after the surgery. If an appointment is required, a letter will be posted to you. Your nurse will give you discharge advice before you go home.

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

As with any surgery, circumcision has some risks, which include:

### **Common (greater than one in 10)**

- Swelling of the penis lasting several days

### **Occasional (between one in 10 and one in 50)**

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

### **Rare (less than one in 50)**

- Scar tenderness
- Failure to be completely satisfied with the cosmetic result.
- Occasional need for removal of excessive skin later
- Meatitis; inflammation of the urethral opening from the loss of protective foreskin which can lead to ulceration and meatal narrowing. You will be given

Chloramphenicol cream to apply generously on the exposed head of the penis to prevent this from happening as much as possible.

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

- Topical Steroids – The application of steroid cream to the foreskin can be beneficial.
- Stretching Techniques – Can be useful for the non-retractable foreskin when scarring is not present.



# What issues should I look out for?

- The child is not drinking well at home.
- The child is in a lot of pain and painkillers do not seem to help.
- The operation site seems inflamed, red, or the skin seems hotter than the surrounding skin.
- There is any oozing from the operation site.

If you have these or other concerns after the operation, please use the following numbers:

**Monday to Friday, daytime:** 01904 726010.

Please ask to speak to a paediatric nurse.

**At other times**, or if no paediatric nurse is available at the above number: 01904 722017.

Please note the nurses may give you advice, or they may direct you to contact your GP.

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

Meeting the needs and preferences of patients and carers is at the centre of everything we do. We hope that you found this leaflet useful and informative.

If you would like to comment on it, please contact Mr Filip Kondylis, Consultant Urological Surgeon, Department of Urology, York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE, telephone 01904 725850 or email [marie.robertson@nhs.net](mailto:marie.robertson@nhs.net).

## **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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