Should I Circumcise My Son?
A Urologist and Mother Examines the Myths and Facts Behind Male Infant Circumcision

Myth: It is cleaner.

**Fact:** Special cleaning of the foreskin is *not required*. Unlike a woman's genitals, the foreskin provides natural lubrication. It is important for healthy sexual function, especially the gliding action that occurs between partners.

Myth: Dad is ok with his circumcision, so my son will be ok with his.

**Fact:** A significant number of men are unhappy about their circumcisions, even though their fathers chose it for them. (Similarly, many circumcised women choose to have their own daughters circumcised.)

Myth: It prevents disease.

**Fact:** Circumcision actually causes disease. Complications include bleeding, infection, and meatal stenosis. When proper foreskin care is used, disease rates are quite low. The medical need for circumcision in Finland, a country which does not cut its infants, is 1 in 16,667.

Myth: A foreskin is not necessary for normal sex.

**Fact:** Though it may be enjoyable, the sexual experience, for men and their partners, is incomplete without a foreskin. The foreskin provides lubrication and important biomechanical and sensory functions that are completely absent without a foreskin.

Myth: It prevents penile cancer.

**Fact:** The American Cancer Society recommends good hygiene, not smoking, and avoiding HPV infection as valid preventive measures against penile cancer. Circumcision is not recommended.

Myth: It prevents STDs.

**Fact:** Circumcised men can and do contract and transmit STDs. STDs are prevented with abstinence, mutual monogamy, reduced number of sexual partners, and condom use.

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