



Circumcision

Should You or Shouldn't You?

Baby boys are born with a skin covering the sensitive end of the penis. This covering is called foreskin. The surgical removal of the foreskin is called circumcision. There's a debate about whether routine circumcision is necessary. It was originally thought that by removing the foreskin, the chances of penile cancer were lowered.

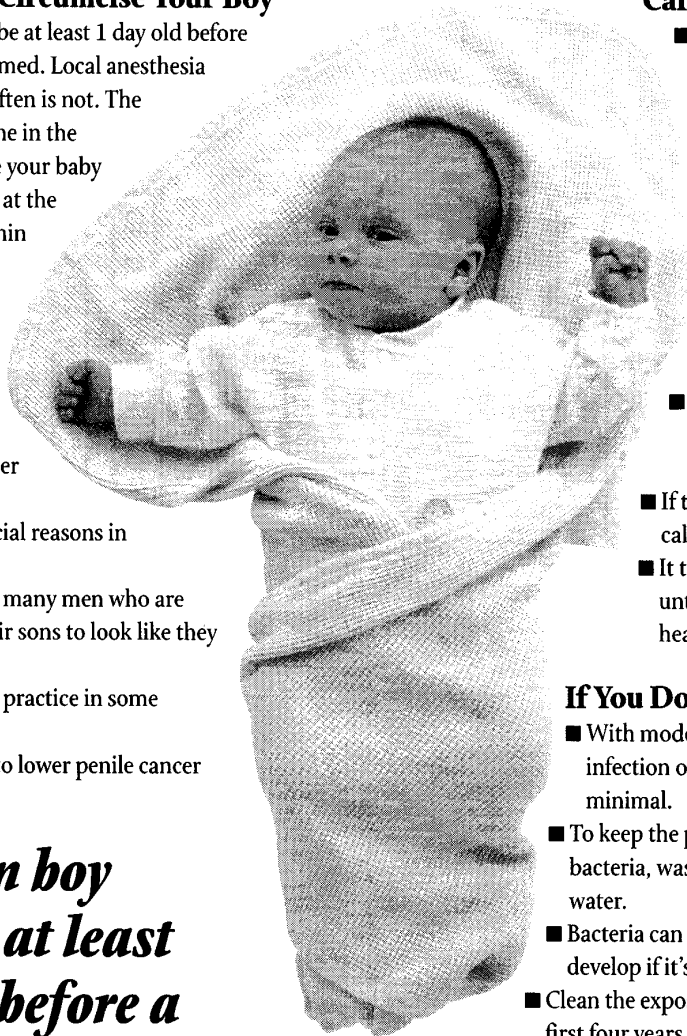
If You Choose to Circumcise Your Boy

A newborn boy should be at least 1 day old before this procedure is performed. Local anesthesia can be used, but most often is not. The procedure is usually done in the hospital before you take your baby home, or it can be done at the pediatrician's office within the first few days after birth.

Circumcision:

- was originally done to prevent disease by making the penis easier to clean.
- is done mainly for social reasons in the United States.
- is often done because many men who are circumcised want their sons to look like they do.
- is a religious or social practice in some cultures.
- has not been proven to lower penile cancer rates.

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Care of Circumcision

- To prevent the scab from sticking to the diaper, apply petroleum jelly to the tip of the penis after each diaper change.
- Wash the penis daily with warm water.
- To dry, pat with a soft towel.
- Avoid using alcohol or baby wipes on the penis.
- If the penis gets infected, the whole shaft will get red and swell. Call your baby's doctor.
- If the scab bleeds excessively, call your baby's doctor.
- It takes about five to seven days until the area is completely healed.

If You Don't Circumcise

- With modern hygiene practices, risk of infection of an uncircumcised penis is minimal.
- To keep the penis clean and free of bacteria, wash it daily with warm soapy water.
- Bacteria can grow and an odor can develop if it's not cleaned properly.
- Clean the exposed foreskin gently during the first four years.
- Never force the foreskin to retract. The foreskin may not fully retract until puberty.