

## *Circumcision*

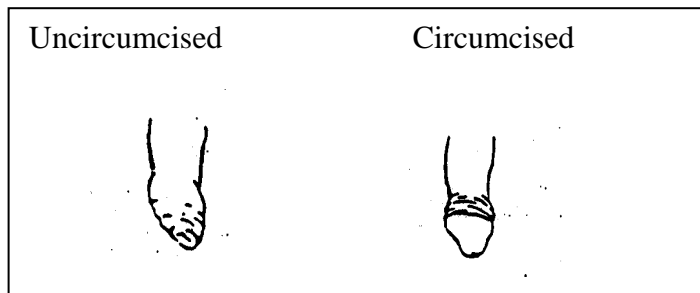
### *Deciding if your baby boy should be circumcised?*

If you have a boy, you'll need to decide whether or not to have him circumcised. Circumcision has been practiced as a religious rite for thousand of years. In the United States most boys are circumcised, but usually for social reasons rather than religious reasons. For example, it is done because "all the other men in the family were circumcised," or because parents don't want their sons to feel "different."

#### **Circumcision**

At birth, most boys have skin that completely covers, or almost covers, the end of the penis. Circumcision removes some of this foreskin so that The tip of the penis (glans) and the urethra, through which the baby urinates, are exposed to air. Routine circumcisions are performed in the hospital within a few days after birth. When done by an experienced physician, circumcision takes only a few minutes and is rarely complicated. Many doctors provide local anesthesia in an effort to reduce the stress for the baby, but most circumcisions are done without medication. The option of using local anesthesia to minimize discomfort is one that should be carefully considered, since there are potential complications associated with its use.

**Circumcision is the removal of foreskin at the tip of the penis.**



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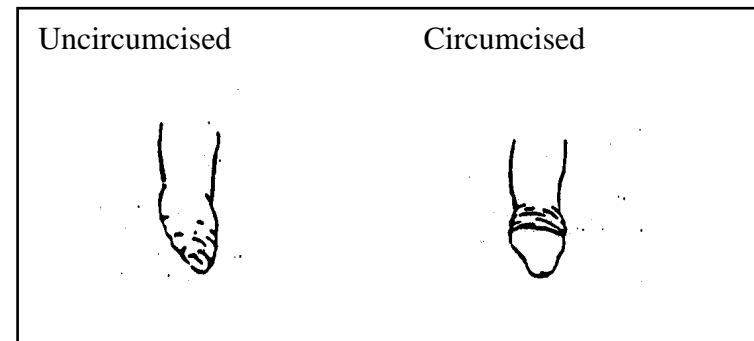
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Unless you are sure you're having a girl, it's a good idea to make a decision about circumcision ahead of time, so you don't have to struggle with the decision amid the fatigue and excitement following delivery.

The American Academy of Pediatrics believes that circumcision has potential medical benefits and advantages, as well as inherent disadvantages and risks. Therefore, they recommend that the decision to circumcise is one best made by parents in consultation with their pediatrician. Factors affecting the decision include medical conditions, aesthetics, religion, cultural attitudes, social pressures, and tradition. Your pediatrician should explain and discuss the benefits and risks of circumcision with you. An informed consent should be obtained before the procedure is performed.

Jefferson County Public Health  
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