Are you considering male circumcision to reduce your risk of HIV infection?

Find out more about the procedure and the benefits.

What is male circumcision?

Male circumcision is a one-off medical procedure. It removes a fold of skin that covers the head of the penis - the foreskin. Circumcision can be carried out at any age. Circumcision may be performed for medical or religious reasons.

This fact sheet discusses voluntary medical circumcision done in a medical environment by a medical professional.

Male circumcision and HIV prevention

- The inner foreskin contains cells that HIV targets to enter the body.
- Small tears or genital ulcers on the foreskin can increase HIV risk.
- Circumcision only protects men (not women) from acquiring HIV, reducing their risk by 60%.1
- It does not reduce risk of sexual transmission of HIV onwards to a female or male partner.2

Key facts about male circumcision

Most circumcised men do not experience any effect on...

- sexual desire or satisfaction
- erectile function
- penetration
- pain during sex
- size of their penis.3

Important to know before circumcision

- Do not masturbate or have sex until 6 weeks after circumcision
- Having unprotected sex before healing increases your risk of infection
- Circumcised men who are living with HIV can still transmit HIV
Circumcision does not give 100% protection – still use condoms
Follow the aftercare advice given by your healthcare provider
Test regularly for HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).4

The step-by-step process

- Pre-circumcision consultation
- HIV & STI test offered
- Informed consent
- Appointment booked
- Medical procedure in medical setting
- Post-circumcision consultation
- Follow up appointments
- Refer a friend!

Female circumcision

Female circumcision (or female genital mutilation - FGM) is a completely different procedure to male circumcision.

- It has no health benefits
- It causes extreme harm to girls and women
- It does not protect against HIV
- It is illegal in many countries.

It must not be considered as an HIV prevention initiative like male circumcision.5

Know your rights

You have the right to:

- refuse circumcision
- be circumcised by a medical professional
- be circumcised at any age.

[{{"attributes":{},"fields":{}}}]  
2. CDC (2013) 'Male Circumcision'
3. NHS (2013) 'Male circumcision 'doesn't affect sexual satisfaction''
4. NHS Choices (2016) 'Circumcision in adults'
5. WHO (2016) 'Female genital mutilation'

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