

HIV and voluntary male circumcision

Are you considering voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) to reduce your risk of HIV infection?

Find out more about the procedure and the benefits.

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What is male circumcision?



Male circumcision removes a fold of skin that covers the head of the penis – the foreskin.



Circumcision can be carried out at any age for medical or religious reasons.

This factsheet is about voluntary circumcision which is done by a trained medical professional.

What are the benefits?

VMMC reduces the risk of a circumcised man being infected by HIV by 60%.



- ✓ It is a quick, safe procedure with no long-term side effects.
- ✓ It reduces the chances of getting other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- ✓ Circumcision has been shown to help prevent cancer of the penis.

How does VMMC protect against HIV?



It removes an HIV entry point – the inner foreskin contains cells that HIV targets to enter the body.



Small tears or genital ulcers on the foreskin can increase the risk of HIV infection.



It does NOT reduce the risk of sexual transmission of HIV on to a female or male partner.

What else do I need to know?



Circumcision should always be done by a trained health professional in a clinical setting. Do not use a traditional healer or religious leader.



It's important to know your status before considering circumcision. If you are HIV-positive, circumcision doesn't reduce the chances of you passing HIV on to others.



Circumcision reduces but doesn't eliminate the risk of HIV infection. So stay smart and keep using other forms of protection like condoms or PrEP.



Get tested regularly for HIV and other STIs.

Know your rights

You have the right to:

- ✓ be fully informed by a trained health worker
- ✓ be circumcised by a medical professional.