

Adult Circumcision

Following your visit to the Urology Clinic, you will have agreed with your hospital doctor or nurse that you should have a circumcision. Circumcision is a minor surgical operation to remove your foreskin. This leaflet explains what the operation involves; what you might expect following the operation and the possible complications associated with it.

If you have any further questions after reading this leaflet, please do not hesitate to discuss them with either your family doctor or with the hospital staff.

Reasons for circumcision

The most common reasons for a man to need a circumcision are:

- **Phimosis** This is when your foreskin is so tight that it cannot be pulled back over the head (the glans) of the penis. This can make washing very difficult and can also cause pain when the penis is erect or during sexual intercourse.
- **Paraphimosis** occurs when the foreskin has been pulled back over the glans but then cannot be replaced to its original position. Painful swelling of your foreskin and glans can then occur. This can sometimes happen suddenly and may need you to visit an accident and emergency department for urgent attention.
- **Balanitis** is an infection of the foreskin and the skin underneath. It can be treated with antibiotic or steroid creams but if the condition returns, you may be advised to have a circumcision to prevent repeated infection.

The operation

Circumcision is usually performed as a day case. This means you will be given an appointment date to attend the hospital, the circumcision will be performed and you will be allowed home on the same day. You will be asked to sign a consent form before your operation. The operation is most commonly performed under general anaesthetic (when you will be completely asleep), but it can also be performed under local anaesthetic (whilst you are awake). This involves injecting a local anaesthetic into the base of the penis to produce numbness or temporary loss of feeling in the area of your operation. The type of anaesthetic you choose will be discussed with your surgeon and your anaesthetist.

During the operation your surgeon will remove your foreskin leaving the glans of your penis exposed. Your skin wound will be closed using stitches. The stitches do not need to be removed; they will go soft, come undone and fall out within two or three weeks.

There will be a dressing covering your wound, which should be left in place overnight.

You may soak the dressing off in a bath or shower the next day.

After your operation

Pain

You will have some discomfort and soreness, which is usually relieved by taking the painkillers prescribed.

If necessary you may apply a small amount of Vaseline or the gauze provided to prevent the wound rubbing on your clothing. Wear comfortable close fitting

underpants. Avoid tight jeans or trousers. You may feel a slight pulling around the stitches as the wound heals.

Bruising and Swelling

It is normal to experience some bruising and swelling around the operation site.

Work and Exercise

You may return to work in about one week if you have a light non-physical job. You may require longer if you have a heavy manual job, this will depend on how you feel. Exercise can be resumed when you feel comfortable, gradually increasing the intensity after one to two weeks.

Sex

You should avoid sexual activity, including masturbation, until your stitches have dissolved and your wound is fully healed. This may take up to four or six weeks. You will continue to have erections during sleep. These do not usually cause any problems but can be uncomfortable. On resuming sexual activity you may notice a slight increase in sensitivity of the head of the penis during intercourse. Whilst a circumcision does not affect your sexual desire or performance, for some patients the head of the penis may become less sensitive over time resulting in less pleasure during sexual activity.

Benefits

- You will no longer have a tight or painful foreskin.
- You will not have further infections in this area.
- Sexual intercourse should be more comfortable.
- You will find it much easier to wash and clean this area.

Risks

Anaesthetic

The use of any anaesthetic involves a small risk and your anaesthetist will explain this to you.

If you had a local anaesthetic

If you had a local anaesthetic you should not drive until you can perform an emergency stop without your wound hurting. It is advisable to wait at least 24-48 hours after the operation before attempting to drive.

If you had a general anaesthetic

If you had a general anaesthetic you may feel normal soon after you wake but you will be drowsy and your reactions sluggish for 24-48 hours.

It is important that in the first 24 hours **you should not:**

- Be left in the house alone, nor look after young children.
- Drive (it is advisable to check with your insurance company how long your insurance is invalid following general anaesthetic).
- Operate machinery; this includes cookers and other domestic appliances.
- Make any important decisions or sign any legal documents.
- Drink alcohol.

You should:

- Rest at home.
- Eat and drink normally if you feel like doing so but avoid rich or heavy, spicy meals.
- Be careful going up and down stairs.

Infection

As with any surgical procedure there is a small risk of infection which may require further treatment. You may have a daily bath or shower and wash gently around the wound. Pat the wound thoroughly dry with a clean towel. If you notice any excessive swelling, redness, pain, oozing from the wound, or if you develop a temperature or feel unwell, you should contact your GP.

Bleeding

If the wound starts to bleed, use the gauze provided and apply pressure to the area. If the bleeding becomes very heavy or will not stop, contact your GP or visit the Accident and Emergency Department of the hospital. On rare occasions another procedure may be necessary to stop excessive bleeding.

Delayed wound healing

This can happen if your stitches tear before your wound has completely healed. This is why it is important to try to avoid sexual activity for 4-6 weeks or until the wound is completely healed.

Changes in sensation

Some people notice altered or reduced sensation of their glans after circumcision. Occasionally, these changes may be permanent. On rare occasions, the scar may become permanently tender.

Cosmetic appearance

Some patients are not completely satisfied with the final appearance after circumcision.

Alternative treatments

Drugs or creams to reduce inflammation – leaving the foreskin in place.

Outpatient appointment

Most patients are discharged from the hospital after a circumcision and do not need to be seen again in the clinic. If you have any problems please contact the Urology Department or your GP.

Useful contact number

Department of Urology,

Royal Bolton Hospital

Bolton NHS Foundation Trust

Tel: 01204 390162 (Monday to Friday: 8.30am to 5.00 pm)

We recognise that not everyone will find this document easy to read. We can arrange for large print, audio tape versions and for summaries or explanations in other languages. Please call 01204 390193 if we can help.