Male Circumcision

Male circumcision is a surgery to remove the foreskin of the penis or to cut the foreskin so the opening is larger. This is usually an elective procedure. Elective means the surgery is done when it is the best time for you. It may be done more urgently for medical reasons. One reason to have surgery right away is when the foreskin is so tight that it cannot be retracted. This is called phimosis. Other reasons include infection of the area under the foreskin or head of the penis (*glans*).When only the foreskin is cut, it is called a dorsal (on top of the foreskin) incision. This procedure leaves the entire foreskin but makes the end of the foreskin looser so it can be pulled back over the head of the penis.

BEFORE THE PROCEDURE

- Do not take aspirin or blood thinners for a week prior to surgery, or as your caregiver suggests.
- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight the night before surgery, or as instructed.
- Let your caregiver know if you develop a cold or other infection before surgery.
- You should be present 1 hour before the procedure, or as directed. Check in at the admissions desk to fill out necessary forms if not pre-registered. There may be consent forms to sign prior to the procedure. Should friends or family be with you, there is a waiting room available for them while you are having your procedure.
- Before the procedure, you will be washed and given a local anesthetic to make sure you feel no pain.

LET YOUR CAREGIVERS KNOW ABOUT THE FOLLOWING:

- Allergies.
- Medications taken including herbs, eye drops, over the counter medications and creams.
- Use of steroids (by mouth or creams).
- Previous problems with anesthetics or Novocaine.
- History of blood clots (*thrombophlebitis*).
- History of bleeding or blood problems.
- Previous surgery.
- Other health problems.

RISKS AND COMPLICATIONS

The most common complications include:

- Bleeding.
- Infection.
- Pain.
- Urethral injury. The urethra is the opening on the end of the penis that carries your urine out.
- Breaking open of the surgical wound from an unwanted erection after surgery can occur.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- After your circumcision, you may have some pain or discomfort for several days. If pain medications were given by your caregiver, take them as instructed.
- Do not take aspirin or nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications such as Advil® and Motrin® as these can increase the risk of bleeding.
- Your caregiver may or may not have put a bandage on your penis. This bandage should stay on for 48 hours (2 days) or as instructed. Usually, the bandage falls off after 2 days. If it does not, you can soak it off with warm, soapy water. No bandage is needed following this unless your caregiver tells you otherwise.
- Do not get your wound wet for 2 days or as instructed.
- After 2 days, you may take a shower or sponge bath. Clean your penis with warm soapy water. After you shower, gently pat your incision dry with a towel. Do not rub it. Clean around the foreskin regularly. For comfort, you may take warm water sitz baths 2-3 times daily for 20 minutes to soothe the affected area.
- Antibiotics, anti-fungal, or cortisone creams or ointments may be used as directed.
- All sexual activity should be avoided until your caregiver says it is OK.
- Your caregiver may provide you with an ampule of amyl nitrate. This can be inhaled (breathed in) as directed to stop an erection that occurs during the recovery period. This can damage the surgical incision.

- Serious infections may require medications which kill germs (*antibiotics*).
- Take time off work or school as directed by your caregiver.
- If you do heavy lifting or if your job keeps you seated and you are not able to move around freely for long periods, a week off may be necessary.
- Avoid fast-moving or contact sports, cycling and swimming until your circumcision has fully healed. This may take 4-6 weeks.
- Call your caregiver for problems which are not getting better in 2-3 days or which seem to be getting worse.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF YOU:

- Have a fever of 101° F (38.3° C) or more.
- Have redness or swelling around your wound.
- Have yellow or green drainage coming from your wound.
- Have any bleeding that does not stop when you put mild pressure on it.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You are unable to urinate.
- You have pain when passing urine.
- You have increasing pain not controlled with medications.

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