

CIRCUMCISION.....

The reason for circumcision is found in the 17th chapter of Genesis where God uses the removal of the male foreskin as a sign of the covenant between Himself and His chosen people. This is the basis for the use of circumcision by Muslims and Jews alike. Christians have through the centuries, followed or departed from this prescription via their individual cultural backgrounds since circumcision was no longer necessary for salvation.

Circumcision is the removal of the male foreskin with topical anesthetic.

Are there risks with the procedure?

The most common risk is bleeding or infection (<1%). If you do not have the circumcision performed at the time of birth, there is 8% chance of needing it done at a later date due to adhesions or infection developing.

Is it necessary?

That is the question we want to have answered with assurance. What we in the scientific community can agree on are:

- There is a slightly increased risk of cervical cancer in women whose partners were not circumcised, however there is a far greater risk of cervical cancer due to multiple sexual partners and early age of sexual activity
- Epidemiologic evidence suggests that you have a 3.2 times greater risk of penile cancer if you are not circumcised. However, this cancer is very rare (2.2 per 100,000)
- Circumcision is an independent variable to contracting or spreading an STD; with no protective effect noted
- In 1996, substantial evidence accumulated that circumcision provided protection against HIV infection, with uncircumcised men being between 1.5 and 9.6 times more likely to become infected with the virus than circumcised men
- There is a twelve fold increase in urinary tract infections in uncircumcised boys

The ambiguity in data caused the American Academy of Pediatrics in 1999 to issue their "Circumcision Policy Statement" which read, "Existing evidence demonstrates potential medical benefits of new born circumcision; however, these data are not sufficient to recommend routine neonatal circumcision."

We at AALFA Family Clinic want you to make an informed decision about this most common of surgical procedures. We can perform the procedure in the clinic. Fathers and Mothers are welcome to be present if they wish.

The decision to circumcise or not to circumcise is entirely yours. We feel that your child does not have to look like Daddy in this area to feel self assured; both circumcised and uncircumcised penises miss the toilet often, as boys do.

We at AALFA Family Clinic hope this brief overview was helpful. Talk to us at an appointment if you have further questions.

Bibliography.....

- American Academy of Pediatrics, Task Force on Circumcision, "Circumcision Policy Statement" *Pediatrics* 103 (1999), 686-93.
- *Circumcision: A History of the World's Most Controversial Surgery*, David Gollaher, Basic Books, New York, 2000.