

CARE OF THE FORESKIN



Postpartum Parent Support Program

Information Sheet

Canada

In our culture most adult men are circumcised. This means that many new parents do not know how to care for the uncircumcised or intact penis. Today many couples are deciding not to circumcise their baby boys because of the potential problems and the pain of the procedure. This information sheet was written to help parents care for the penis of their new son.

A circumcision is the removal of the foreskin which is the piece of skin that covers the rounded end of the penis. The foreskin protects the sensitive glans from urine and stool and the two grow as one tissue. It is normal to be unable to push back the foreskin in baby boys. As your son grows, the foreskin begins to separate from the end of the penis. In the majority of boys the foreskin can be pushed back from the glans somewhere between 4 and 8 years of age. Other boys will not be able to retract their foreskin until they are 12 years old and this is normal too.

The foreskin will gradually loosen over a period of years and should be left alone until it can be easily retracted. **NEVER FORCE IT BACK.** Forcing the foreskin back may harm the penis and cause pain, bleeding and possible scarring.

The outside of the penis can be washed along with the rest of your baby's bottom with each diaper change. The area underneath the foreskin does not need to be cleaned until the foreskin can be easily retracted.

When the foreskin is easily retractable it should be gently pulled back allowing the glans to be cleansed with a mild soap and water. **ALWAYS** bring the foreskin back to its normal position after washing. When your child is older you can teach him to clean his penis, just as you teach him to wash his hands and brush his teeth.

If you have any further questions, please speak with your doctor.

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By mail: Canadian Government Publishing
Communication Canada
Ottawa, ON, Canada K1A 0S9

Catalogue No.: H39-153/20-2003E

ISBN: 0-660-18958-5

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