

Circumcision

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is circumcision?

Boys are born with a hood of skin, called the foreskin that covers the head of the penis. With circumcision, the foreskin is surgically removed, leaving the end of the penis exposed.

Why is circumcision done?

For many families, circumcision is a religious or cultural ritual. It can also be a matter of family tradition, personal hygiene or preventive health. Simpler hygiene and decreased risk of urinary tract infections are key health benefits. Circumcision may also reduce the risk of certain sexually transmitted infections and cancers.

Is circumcision required?

No. We respect and honor your family's choice in this personal matter.

When should the circumcision decision be made?

Ideally, it's helpful to decide prior to your hospital stay. We encourage you to let your obstetrician or midwife know during your prenatal visits, as well as include this decision in your birth plan. You can also choose to have your baby circumcised at a later date by your baby's pediatrician.

When is circumcision done and how long does it take?

Circumcision is most typically done within the first two weeks, often within the first 48 hours while in the hospital. Premature babies or those with special medical concerns may wait until they're close to leaving the hospital. The procedure takes about 15 minutes, and we're generally able to bring your baby right back to your room.

Who performs the circumcision?

Your baby's circumcision may be done by your pediatrician or by one of our Stanford Children's health physicians during your stay. The doctor will explain the risks and benefits, as well as answer any questions you may have. Prior to the procedure, there's also a consent form that you'll need to sign. You can also choose to have the procedure done by your baby's pediatrician after you leave the hospital.

Is circumcision covered by my insurance?

Since this an elective procedure, it's possible that it may not be covered by your insurance. We recommend you contact your health insurance prior to delivery to find out if circumcision is covered. Our hospital staff unfortunately cannot help with insurance authorizations. Please be aware that the bill for this procedure may come from Stanford Children's Health rather than from John Muir Health.

Is circumcision painful?

We follow the guidelines of the American Academy of Pediatrics that it's best to provide your baby pain management prior to the procedure, such as topical numbing cream and / or local injection of a pain killer.

How long does it take for circumcision to heal?

It takes about 7-10 days to heal. We'll be sure to go over aftercare instructions with you prior to going home.