



## Circumcision—To Do or Not to Do

It can be hard for some people to decide whether or not to have a circumcision done. Even if it is difficult, we suggest that if you decide not to do it, realize that this is not a decision that should be changed later. The surgery is very easily tolerated by newborns, but as the boys get older, the surgery is more difficult and more painful. So, this is a decision to be made now and, most probably, for all time.

### Reasons Many Parents Choose to Circumcise

Research studies suggest that there are some good medical reasons why your son should be circumcised. These include:

- Circumcision lowers your son's chance of getting urinary tract infections (UTI) in the first year of life.
- Although a rare condition, cancer of the penis is essentially eliminated in circumcised males.
- Research shows that males who are circumcised have a slightly lower risk of getting sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV.
- Circumcision eliminates foreskin infections that occur at the peak age of 3 to 5 years.
- Circumcision prevents phimosis, a narrowing of the opening that makes it impossible to retract the foreskin at a later age.

- Genital hygiene, which is particularly important in unsanitary conditions, may be easier after circumcision.

### Reasons Many Parents Choose Not to Circumcise

There are also good reasons why parents choose *not* to have their son circumcised.

- As with all kinds of surgery, circumcision has some risks. Although uncommon, complications such as local infection and bleeding can occur as a result of the circumcision. On rare occasions, the foreskin may be cut too short or too long, or the circumcision may heal improperly. Since many parents see circumcision as a cosmetic procedure, they choose not to have their son exposed to these risks.
- Many view the foreskin as an important part of the human body that is necessary for the protection of the tip of the penis. If the foreskin is removed the exposed end of the penis may become irritated and cause the opening of the penis to become too small. This causes difficulty in urination and may need to be surgically corrected.
- Almost all uncircumcised boys can be taught proper hygiene that can lower their chances of getting infections, cancer of the penis, and sexually transmitted infections.