



**Full health benefits:  
Circumcised penis**

- the foreskin has been completely removed, under medical conditions, from the head of the penis
- it is easier to keep clean
- eliminates bruising and tearing during sex
- cells that attract HIV have been removed
- reduces the risk of HIV infection by eliminating tearing and bruising
- lower risk of STIs and diseases
- reduces your partner's risk of cervical cancer
- reduces your risk of penile and prostate cancer



**No health benefits:  
uncircumcised penis**



**Partially circumcised  
penis**



- the foreskin covers the head of the penis and it's more difficult to keep clean
- the skin inside the foreskin is soft, and prone to bruising and tearing during sex that allows an entry point for HIV and can cause discomfort during sex
- the foreskin contains cells that act as an entry point for HIV
- there is a higher risk of HIV infection
- higher risk of STIs and diseases that effect uncircumcised men
- men are more likely to get the Human Papilloma Virus which they transmit to their partner, which increases their partner's risk of cervical cancer

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# Male Medical Circumcision



**KNOW THE  
FACTS  
!!!**



**health**  
Department:  
Health  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA





## WHAT IS CIRCUMCISION?

**Medical circumcision is the full removal of the foreskin, fully exposing the head of the penis. Getting circumcised is the right thing to do for your health because it:**

- improves your hygiene as it is easier to keep the head of the penis clean
- reduces your risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as syphilis, genital warts and herpes
- reduces your risk of HIV infection as it decreases the risk of tearing and bruising that can be an entry point for HIV
- removes certain cells within the foreskin that act as an entry point for HIV
- lowers the risk of penile cancer
- reduces your partner's risk of cervical cancer

All men have the right to safe and hygienic medical male circumcision services.

### **Men get circumcised for health, cultural and religious reasons.**

In some cases, you may have been circumcised for religious or cultural reasons. Certain religions circumcise their boys soon after birth. Some cultures circumcise their young men as part of an initiation process that marks the passage from boyhood to manhood. Men who are circumcised for religious or cultural reasons need to make sure that they are fully circumcised to achieve the medical benefits

### **To get the full health benefits of male circumcision it is important for you to know whether you are:**

- uncircumcised
- partially circumcised - only part of the foreskin has been removed or a slit has been cut in the foreskin
- fully circumcised - where the entire foreskin has been removed

## WHAT IS THE MALE CIRCUMCISION PROCESS?

### **You have the right to safe medical circumcision in a hygienic and clean medical facility.**

Medical circumcision is the most hygienic, safest way to be circumcised, and the only way to ensure that you get the full sexual and health benefits. Medical circumcisions are performed quick and efficiently at friendly health facilities throughout South Africa, such as community health centres, clinics and district hospitals.

### **Knowing your HIV status allows you to make the best decisions about your health and lifestyle.**

When you arrive at the clinic or hospital, you will receive group counseling. You will be offered counseling and testing for HIV. *HIV testing is not a requirement for MMC.* If you test HIV positive you may still get medically circumcised depending on the doctors recommendation. If need be you will be put on treatment. Many brothers are living healthy and productive lives with HIV. HIV counseling and testing is confidential. You will also be examined for sexually transmitted infections and foreskin abnormalities.

### **You can get circumcised at any time throughout the year**

Summer or winter - medical male circumcisions can be performed safely at any time of the year.

### **Your circumcision will be performed by a trained health provider and it is a quick process**

Before coming to the clinic make sure you have eaten well. You will not be circumcised if you arrive at the clinic under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

You will receive a small dose of anaesthetic which will only numb your penis for a short while. The procedure lasts for about 30 min. The wound is then stitched and dressed, and you are given painkillers to help manage any mild pain or discomfort you may have when the anaesthetic wears off. You are also given instructions on how to keep the wound clean while it heals, as well as a medical certificate should you require time off from work or studies while you recover. And then you can go home.

### **You must not have sex until the wound has fully healed**

The healing process takes six weeks, during which time you may not have sex or masturbate. If you do, the wound will take longer to heal completely – and you run a higher risk of getting HIV. For the first few days, you must keep the dressing on and dry. You will then return to the health care provider for a follow-up visit and to have the dressing removed. After this, you should gently wash your penis in a salt solution (two teaspoons of salt in a cup of warm water), using a soft cloth. The stitches will fall out after 10 to 14 days.

### **If you have concerns, speak to your clinic or doctor**

Like with any surgical procedure, there can be problems after a circumcision, but in most cases these are slight, such as reaction to the pain injection, minor bleeding, or some swelling and pain. With proper care, these issues are easily treated. Should you have any concerns, go to your clinic or doctor immediately.

## WHAT MALE CIRCUMCISION DOES NOT DO

### **Male circumcision:**

- does not prevent pregnancy
- offers only partial protection against HIV infection
- does not benefit the partner of an HIV-positive man
- does not reduce the risk of HIV infection during anal sex

Getting circumcised does not prevent pregnancy and **ONLY REDUCES** the risk of HIV infection. This means that you cannot let your guard down. If you are circumcised, **you should still use a condom** every time you have sex, stick to one sexual partner and test for HIV to know your status so that you can make the best decision for your health.

If you are HIV-positive, you may also be circumcised, but this does **not protect your partner from HIV.** If you test positive for HIV you should have **your CD4 cell** count taken to determine the strength of your immune system and you will be referred to care and treatment options. All men whether HIV positive or negative who choose to be circumcised should continue to use condoms at all times to protect themselves and their partners. Circumcision only reduces the risk but is not guaranteed.

**Circumcision does not reduce your risk of HIV infection if you have anal sex.**

Medical male circumcision is the best option for your sexual and reproductive health. Circumcision offers a lifetime of benefits including better hygiene, reduced risk of sexually transmitted infections and HIV. It reduces your risk of penile cancer and your partner's risk of cervical cancer. Quite simply, getting a medical circumcision is the right thing to do.



**Please go back to the clinic after 2 days so that we can make sure you are healing well and safely.**