Information for Parents About
Newborn Circumcision

How is the circumcision performed? First of all, we want your son to be as comfortable as possible, so we apply lidocaine paste with a plastic barrier initially to numb the skin of the penis. Just prior to the circumcision, we inject lidocaine at the base of the penis with a tiny needle to further numb the penis (numbness resolves spontaneously after about 2 hours). We use a form-fitting plastic restraint with Velcro straps to hold your son securely during the circumcision, and welcome you to stay near him to dip his pacifier in sucrose solution (sugar water) and to rub his head and comfort him during the procedure.

We use two methods to remove the foreskin (prepuce) in newborn boys, and choose the method based on the size and appearance of your sons penis. The first, and most important step in circumcision (after pain management) is to fully release all adhesions between the foreskin and the glans penis in order to assure proper positioning of the circumcision device and to achieve optimal results following circumcision (appropriate amount of foreskin removal and prevention of recurrent adhesions). Applying petroleum jelly to the penis with every diaper change for the first 3 months following circumcision is important to promote good healing, and to prevent discomfort, urethral meatal stenosis (from rubbing on the diaper) and recurrent glanular adhesions.

The Plastibell device is a hollow plastic ring that is placed over the head of the penis. The foreskin is pulled over the ring and then a string is tied against the ring to hold the two skin layers together during the healing process. The foreskin is then removed leaving the ring, the string and a small amount of the foreskin on the penis. The skin will look pale (like the umbilical cord) at first and then grow darker over the next several days. The ring will dislodge spontaneously within the first 14 days following the circumcision. At this point the penis will still be red and somewhat swollen, but the inflammation will resolve fully within the first 6 weeks following circumcision.

The Gomco™ clamp is placed over the head of the penis, and then the foreskin is pulled over the clamp and a ring is tightened against the clamp. This seals the two skin edges to make them heal together without stitches. After the clamp is tightened, the foreskin is removed. After the circumcision, you may notice some blood spotting on the diaper, and possibly some swelling and bruising on the penis or scrotum.

Could there be any complications from the circumcision? Complications are rare following circumcision. However, a small amount of blood on the diaper is normal following a circumcision. If more significant active dripping of blood occurs, we may need to hold pressure on the penis for several minutes or apply some surgical glue (Dermabond) to stop the bleeding. On rare occasions, a suture may be necessary to control ongoing bleeding after circumcision.

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Infection is possible, but extremely rare. You will notice some swelling, bruising and even some scab formation following the circumcision. This is normal and is not a sign of infection. A yellow and white moist scab on the glans (head of penis) is normal following circumcision and may be present for up to 3 weeks until it is completely healed.

How do I care for my son following the circumcision?
Change the diaper the way you usually would. Apply petroleum jelly (a quarter-size blob) to the penis with every diaper change for the first 3 months to prevent penile adhesions and meatal stenosis. For Plastibell circumcisions, the Plastibell ring should dislodge spontaneously during the first 10 days following the circumcision. If not, then call the Pediatric Urology office to schedule an appointment for removal of the Plastibell ring.

Will my son feel pain during and after the circumcision? We try to decrease the pain caused by circumcision as much as we can. We use a local anesthetic paste and injection placed at the base of the penis. You may notice a small puncture (like a mosquito bite) and some bruising around the base of the penis from the injection. This will go away fully within a day or two. Using petroleum jelly also prevents abrasion and rubbing of the penis against the diaper, and will further limit his discomfort after circumcision.

What should I be concerned about after circumcision? If you see ongoing oozing or dripping of blood from the penis, especially if you can scoop blood clots up from the diaper in a tablespoon you should call us immediately (214-750-0808). Fever over 101°F may be associated with an unrelated illness, but could also be due to a penile cellulitis (infection), especially if a creamy yellowish-green liquid discharge is coming from the penis. If your son cannot pass urine, or if you see swelling and redness on the abdomen near the penis you should also call us immediately (214-750-0808).

You will see swelling and bruising of the penis following the circumcision. This is normal, and should slowly resolve over the first 3 weeks following circumcision.

In the event of an urgent emergency, you may take your child to the Medical City Children’s Emergency Department (972-566-3340) or to an emergency room near to you.