



circumcision

a lifetime of medical benefits



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Background on Circumcision

During the 20th century, particularly over the last 2 decades, there has been convincing and increasing medical evidence of major preventive health benefits of newborn circumcision. The role of circumcision in preventing cancer of the penis, foreskin infections, constriction by a tight foreskin opening (phimosis) and the promotion of cleanliness and genital hygiene has long been known. Greatest recent interest has resulted from compelling scientific data showing that newborn circumcision also offers protection against severe kidney infections during the first year of life which can cause permanent damage in infants, and in the demonstration, mainly in underdeveloped countries, that uncircumcised heterosexual men are much more likely to develop human immunodeficiency virus infection (HIV), following sexual exposure than are circumcised men. The increased prevalence of HIV in uncircumcised men in Africa and Asia has recently been recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO), and in some African countries with epidemic AIDS, circumcision is being performed on older boys and men as a prophylactic measure. As the new millennium approaches and evidence on HIV accumulates it seems likely there will be more pressure to encourage universal circumcision.

Unfortunately the results of research and evidence on the medical benefits of circumcision have not been widely disseminated to the public, media or the medical profession. The evidence crosses medical specialties - pediatrics, urology, infectious disease, geriatrics- and has not been consolidated. Activist lay anti-circumcision groups dominate the media and the internet with misleading anecdotes, testimonials, opinions and distortions. Even medical professional organizations seem to be confused and intimidated and their pronouncements have generally been weak, contradictory, biased and often inaccurate.

The purpose of this website is to present the current medical evidence on newborn circumcision in an easily understandable form, using authoritative sources, scientific data and citing references and information from different disciplines. Historical reviews, news items, anecdotes and opinions will be used only as supplements to the facts and not as the primary source of information. We will cover such aspects as local anesthesia, techniques and methods of circumcision, complications, how to choose a knowledgeable operator, emotional effects and future sexual function. Our goal is to offer prospective parents, professionals and the public at large maximum factual and educational information on this widespread medical procedure, which will play a significant public health role in the new millennium. To contact us, send an email to info@medicirc.org.

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