

Circumcision Care and Problems

What is a circumcision?

A circumcision is the removal of the normal male foreskin. The incision is red and tender at first. The tenderness should be minimal by the third day. The scab at the incision line comes off in 7 to 10 days. If a Plastibell ring was used, it should fall off by 14 days (10 days on the average). While it cannot fall off too early, don't pull it off because you could cause bleeding.

Any cuts, scrapes, or scabs on the head of the penis may normally heal with yellowish-colored skin if your baby has been jaundiced. This bilirubin in healing tissue is commonly mistaken for an infection or pus.

How can I take care of my child?

- **Plastibell ring type** Gently cleanse the area with water 2 times a day or whenever it becomes soiled. Soap is usually unnecessary. A small amount of petroleum jelly or an antibiotic ointment should be applied to the incision line once a day to keep it soft during healing.
- **Incision type (no plastic ring is present)** Remove the dressing (which is usually gauze with petroleum jelly) with warm compresses 24 hours after the circumcision was done. Then care for the area as described for the Plastibell.

When should I call my child's health care provider?

Call IMMEDIATELY if your child has been circumcised recently and:

- The urine comes out in dribbles.
- The head of the penis turns blue or black.
- The incision line bleeds more than a few drops.
- The circumcision looks infected.
- Your baby develops a fever.
- Your baby is acting sick.

Call during office hours if:

- The circumcision looks abnormal to you.
- The Plastibell ring does not fall off within 14 days. (Note: It can't fall off too early.)
- The Plastibell ring starts moving in the wrong direction.
- You have other concerns or questions.

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