



THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION  
OF UROLOGICAL SURGEONS



## Circumcision

### Introduction

Circumcision is a procedure that is carried out to remove the foreskin of the penis.

We have developed this advice and information to help support you whilst you wait for your circumcision. It is designed to help you manage your symptoms and condition and to prevent these from getting worse. It will also help you to prepare for your upcoming surgery.

This guide has been written by the national experts in circumcision and draws on the latest evidence and advice about how best to support people waiting for your procedure.

### Waiting for your circumcision

- Make sure to stay well hydrated to prevent the development of urinary tract infections. If you are getting recurrent urinary tract infections, please let your doctor know as this may mean that your surgery needs to be prioritised.
- Topical creams and washes may be able to provide temporary relief of symptoms such as burning or itching while you are waiting for surgery.
- If you are diagnosed with COVID-19 or are still suffering with COVID-19 symptoms within seven weeks of your operation date, please inform your medical team.

At your preoperative assessment:

- Make sure that your medical team know about any chronic illness that you suffer with, as this can affect your surgery.
- Take an up to date list of all the medications you take. If you have been diagnosed with any new illnesses or started any new medications since

seeing your urologist, you should inform the medical team of these changes in case they affect your surgery.

## Lifestyle changes

It is important that you maintain a healthy lifestyle while waiting for your operation.

**Weight loss:** Being overweight can increase the risk of anaesthetic and post-operative complications and affect wound healing after surgery. This is especially true if there is a large amount of fat surrounding the penis. Losing weight can help reduce these risks and help to speed up wound healing and recovery. Further information can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/lose-weight>. If you are worried about your weight you can speak to your GP practice for advice and referral to a dietitian for support.

**Smoking:** Smoking greatly increases the risk of chest infections after surgery and affects wound healing. It also makes undergoing a general anaesthetic more complicated. It is important that you try to reduce/ stop smoking prior to your surgery. Advice and support with this can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking>. You can also speak to your GP practice and ask for a referral to a smoking cessation programme. Advice is also available on the free NHS Smoking Helpline on 0300 123 1044.

**Alcohol:** Alcohol in excessive amounts can affect overall health and affect your recovery from surgery. We always advise not to exceed the recommended weekly allowances of alcohol intake (<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-advice/calculating-alcohol-units>). General advice can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/alcohol-advice>.

**Diabetes:** If you are diabetic, it is essential that you maintain good control of your condition. Surgery can be risky or even life-threatening in diabetic patients with poor control of their blood sugar. If your blood sugars are uncontrolled or too high, you may not be able to have your surgery. It is important that you have this monitored by your diabetes team to ensure that you are fit to undergo surgery. Further information and support is available at <https://www.diabetes.org.uk>.

## What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

**Inability to pass urine** Tightness of the foreskin can affect the passage of urine and may result in ballooning of the foreskin when passing urine. The tightness of the foreskin can progressively worsen and in severe cases may rarely cause inability to pass urine. This can be very uncomfortable and painful and may affect your kidney function and cause urinary tract infections.

**If you are unable to pass urine it is important that you seek urgent medical advice at the Emergency Department of your local hospital.**

**Paraphimosis** If you have a tight foreskin, it may get pulled back and stuck and cannot go back into its position covering the end of the penis. The end of the penis may then become very painful and swollen. This is known as paraphimosis and is a medical emergency. **You will need to attend your local Accident and Emergency department to avoid further injury and complications.**

**Lumps or masses** If you can feel or see any lumps or masses under the foreskin, or if you notice any discharge from under the foreskin it is important you **see your GP urgently or contact your urology department.**

**Warts or lesions** If you are having a circumcision to treat warts or lesions on the foreskin, it is important that you **contact your urology department or general practitioner if you notice any change or worsening of lesions.**

If you are experiencing **urinary tract infections, burning or stinging when you pass urine, blood in the in the urine or discharge from the penis** then you should see your GP. They can do a urine dipstick test to see if there is infection in the urinary tract which will need treatment with the appropriate antibiotics. If this is the case, they can write to the urology department on your behalf requesting that you surgery be brought forward if possible.

If your symptoms are worsening:

- If you have not yet received any updates regarding your operation day, contact the urology department to check for an update and to see if your operation could be brought forward.
- Contact your urologist or GP practice to let them know that your symptoms are deteriorating or worsening.

## **Additional information**

**Further information on circumcision can be found at:**

- British Association Urological Surgeons Website:  
[https://www.baus.org.uk/patients/information\\_leaflets/88/circumcision](https://www.baus.org.uk/patients/information_leaflets/88/circumcision)
- NHS England Website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/circumcision-in-men/>

**Further information on tight foreskin (phimosis) can be found at:**

- NHS England Website: [www.nhs.uk/conditions/phimosis](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/phimosis)
- British Association Urological Surgeons Website:  
[www.baus.org.uk/patients/conditions/13/tight\\_foreskin\\_phimosis](http://www.baus.org.uk/patients/conditions/13/tight_foreskin_phimosis) (A patient information leaflet is also available on this website)