

## **Religious / Cultural Circumcision**

Some parents' religion or belief means they will want their male child to be circumcised as soon as possible after birth. This service is offered at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Glasgow but will not be undertaken until the child is 9 months of age or older and is generally in good health.

## **Management in Primary Care**

There are certain anatomical contra-indications to carrying out a circumcision such as hypospadias or a significantly buried penis. These should be determined and stated in the referral.

It is important to discuss the referral with both parents, or those with parental responsibility (carers), to ensure that they are both in agreement about the procedure and are both clear about the potential risks of having the surgery done outwith the NHS if they are unhappy about the timescales.

It is important that parents or carers understand that this pathway has been established to ensure safe, high quality circumcision which is respectful of the parents' religion or belief and that will not compromise the health and wellbeing of their child.

If the family are from areas with high prevalence of Sickle Cell Disease, the child will require a blood test to verify their Sickle Cell status. This will be performed after being seen in the out-patients clinic.

## **Referral Details**

To simplify the referral process it is helpful if the following details are included in each and every referral.

- 1) Practicing religion
- 2) Ethnicity (allowing assessment of risk of Sickle Cell or other inherited diseases)
- 3) Family background (if single parent family, or whether both parents are available for consent)
- 4) Co-existing medical conditions

## **Referral Timescale**

The patient and his parents or carers will be sent an appointment to be seen by the consultant at an outpatient clinic for a pre-operative check.

If the patient is referred before 9 months of age, as they are ineligible for surgery, they will be placed on a deferred list for an out-patient appointment. Please do not refer patients until at least 8 months of age so they can be placed directly on a waiting list after being seen at clinic.

## **Operative Management**

Male circumcision is carried out under general anaesthesia by a General Paediatric Surgeon. This will usually be carried out as a day case unless there are complications of surgery or anaesthesia.

The consent of both parents is required as recommended by the BMA and GMC. Both parents must make themselves available for consent, otherwise the surgeon may decide that it is not advisable to proceed with the procedure.

Prior to discharge, a follow-up appointment will be arranged for review in the community. The parents will also be given an information sheet with contact numbers for advice in the case of emergency.

## **PARENT INFORMATION**

### **Circumcision and your child**

#### **What is circumcision?**

Circumcision is an operation to remove the foreskin covering the head of the penis. This may be done for medical or religious reasons. Male circumcision for religious reasons can be carried out under the NHS as long as doctors are satisfied that the child is in good health for the procedure and a general anaesthetic.

#### **I want my child to be circumcised. Who should I tell?**

##### Before your child is born

When you first meet your midwife, you should let her know that, if you have a boy, you want him to be circumcised. Your midwife will write your request in your health records. Both parents should be involved in this decision, if possible.

##### After your child is born

At your child's 6 week check-up, your doctor or other health worker will discuss the circumcision with you and explain what will happen next.

Your doctor will decide if your child is healthy enough to be circumcised and, if the circumcision is in your child's best interests, they will make a referral to a surgeon for the circumcision to take place in a specialist centre.

If your doctor decides that your child should not be circumcised you have the right to see another doctor for a second opinion.

#### **What type of anaesthetic will be used?**

In Scotland, doctors agree that a surgical circumcision should always be carried out under a general anaesthetic. This is safer and less painful for your child. This means that your child will be asleep during the operation.

#### **When will the circumcision take place?**

The operation will be carried out as soon as doctors think it is safe for your child. We currently offer this service in the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Glasgow but not until boys are 9 months of age or older. Our anaesthetic department feel that it is safer to wait until after 9 months of age to give a general anaesthetic.

An out-patient appointment with the surgeon will be arranged so you can discuss the surgery and to allow the surgeon to examine your son to make sure a circumcision is safe. The operation will then be arranged for a date after this appointment.

Before the circumcision takes place, both the child's mother and father will be asked to sign a form to show that they have agreed for the circumcision to be done. If you are the only parent, this should be confirmed by your GP, and you will be asked to sign the form to show you have given your agreement.

The operation is carried out under general anaesthetic and requires a short stay in hospital for a morning or afternoon. You will normally be able to take your child home on the same day as the circumcision takes place.

*If you wish more information about circumcision or the arrangements set out in this leaflet, please speak to your midwife or doctor.*