



Circumcision

Instructions for caring
for your child after
their circumcision

What is a circumcision?

This surgery removes the foreskin and uncovers the head of the penis.

When will my child be able to go home?

Most children go home the day of surgery. If your child has another medical condition, they may need to stay overnight.

How do I care for the surgery site?

- After surgery, your child may have a dressing (bandage) on his penis. There will be an opening in the top that he will be able to urinate (pee) out of.
- If your child does not have a dressing, he may have a PlastiBell ring or surgery glue.
- Starting the day of surgery, put petroleum jelly (Vaseline) over your child's surgical site. This keeps the penis protected while it is healing.
- If the penis is actively bleeding, apply constant, gentle pressure directly to the bleeding area for 5 minutes. If the bleeding continues, call the Seattle Children's Main Campus Emergency Room at 206-987-2222.
- Give your child only sponge baths only for the first 2 days. After that they can take showers and quick baths. Avoid long baths or swimming in pools, lakes or the ocean for 1 week.

Tips for using petroleum jelly

- Use a moderate to large amount each time.
- If your child is in diapers, apply it at **every** diaper change. If your child uses the toilet, apply it 3 to 4 times a day and as needed.
- Use the petroleum jelly for 2 weeks or until the area is completely healed.
- Put the petroleum jelly on with your finger or cotton swab.
- Apply the petroleum jelly around the PlastiBell ring if used or on the tip of the penis over the surgical dressing if used.
- Push back the area around the penis (suprapubic fat pad) if needed so that the petroleum jelly covers the entire surgical site.

How do I care for the dressing (if used)?

- The dressing helps to reduce the risk of bleeding and swelling.
- Remove the dressing at home 2 days after surgery.
- If the dressing becomes dirty with stool (poop), remove it right away so the incision can be cleaned. Follow the steps below to remove the dressing.
- If the dressing gets dirty from stool or falls off early, do not replace it.

To remove the dressing:

1. Have your child sit in a warm bath for about 10 minutes. This helps loosen the dressing and makes it easier to remove.
2. If the bandage is not loosening, have your child sit in the bath for another 10 to 20 minutes.
3. If the dressing is still not coming off easily or seems to be stuck, apply 1 cup of oil (corn, vegetable, olive or baby oil) directly on the penis. Allow this to soak in for 20 minutes and then remove the dressing.
4. If the dressing is still not coming off, call the Urology clinic for more tips.

How do I care for the PlastiBell ring (if used)?

If a PlastiBell ring is used, it should fall off after five days. If the ring falls off before 5 days, call us to schedule an appointment. If the ring does not fall off after 10 days, call us to schedule an appointment. No other special care is needed aside from putting on the petroleum jelly (see above).

What can I expect during the healing process?

- The area around the incision will be swollen and red. You may see a small amount of blood on the dressing or in the diaper the first day after surgery. You may also notice some bruising, yellow crusting or scabbing. This will get better with time.
- For more information and photos of what to expect after surgery, read our handout “Circumcision Photo Guide: What to Expect after Surgery” at seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE2937.pdf.

How much activity can my child do?

- Avoid any straddle activities with your child that increase pressure between their legs for 1 week. This includes:
 - Holding your child on your hip
 - Bouncing your child on your knee
 - Baby-wearing devices
 - Bouncer toys that use a harness
 - Bicycles, tricycles or ride on toys
- Avoid rough play, climbing, contact sports and gym class for 1 week. A good rule of thumb for your child is to keep “both feet on the ground.”

When can my child return to school?

Your child may return to school when they no longer need narcotic pain medication or frequent daytime over-the-counter pain medications. Keep in mind the school will need to be comfortable with putting the petroleum jelly on your child’s penis or your child will need to do this for himself.

To Learn More

- Urology 206-987-2509
- General Surgery 206-987-0237
- Ask your child's nurse or doctor
- www.seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your child's nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

Will my child have pain?

- After surgery, your child will likely feel pain on his penis. We partner with you and your child to relieve pain as completely as possible. No matter the level of your child's pain, believe they are hurting and respond right away.
- Effective pain control will help your child feel better and heal faster. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) and/or ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) are common medicines to treat pain. Older children may receive oxycodone. Check with your healthcare provider before giving any type of medicine to your child.
- The pain will get better as time passes, usually after the first day for most children. In addition to medicine for pain, you can also help your child cope by distracting them with music, games, TV or videos.
- For more information about pain, read our handout "Acute Pain" at seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE503.pdf.

How do I dispose of unused medication?

To keep your family safe, store medicines inside a locked cabinet or location where others cannot easily get to them. Once your child has recovered from surgery, dispose of all unused medicines. Taking leftover pain or other medicines on purpose or by accident, can be very dangerous. For more information about safe disposal of unused medications including pain medications, read our handout "How to Get Rid of Unused Prescription Medicines" at seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE784 or visit takebackyourmeds.org to find a take back place near you.

When should I call a doctor?

If your child is having any problems, call their specialty surgery clinic during the day. After hours, call 206-987-2000 and ask the hospital operator for the General or Urology surgeon on call depending on which service did your child's surgery. Call us if your child has any of these warning signs:

- Fever higher than 101.5° F (38.6° C)
- Redness and swelling that spreads up into the stomach area
- Bleeding that cannot be stopped after five minutes of pressure has been applied
- Your child has pain that can't be controlled by the medicine prescribed
- Cannot pee in 8 to 12 hours after surgery