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CIRCUMCISING YOUR BABY BOY

WHAT IS CIRCUMCISION?

Circumcision is a small operation whereby part of the foreskin is removed to permanently expose the head of the penis. It is usually performed 7 days to 4 weeks after birth and is performed under Emla Cream anaesthetic.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES?

Studies show conflicting results. Several potential benefits include a reduced risk of urinary tract infections and possibly of sexually transmitted diseases in men, including HIV. It may also protect against penile cancer in later life.

RISKS OF CIRCUMCISION

Short Term

Bleeding and infection are the most common problems and occur in 1-500/1-1,000 cases. Bleeding is usually evident at the time of the circumcision and is treated with pressure to the area. Infection is rare and may not be evident until 24-48 hours after the procedure. Some redness and swelling however until the Plastibell falls off is not abnormal.

HOW DO I CARE FOR MY BABY AFTER CIRCUMCISION?

Some swelling of the penis is normal after circumcision and the Plastibell will take 3-8 days, even up to 10 days, to completely fall off. Normal daily bathing of the baby is okay. Every nappy change apply the Betadine ointment you have been given at your circumcision visit, to the top of the penis and Plastibell device. If the Plastibell device has not fallen off by 12 days after circumcision, please contact me. Signs of infection include a high temperature with redness spreading beyond the penis, swelling, and discharge of the entire penis.

When the Plastibell falls off, continue applying Betadine ointment every nappy change for the next 2 weeks. Your baby will then need to be reviewed by me 3 weeks after circumcision. At that visit I will demonstrate how to gently retract the shaft skin back from the head of the penis and ensure no smegma collects. I will demonstrate this to you at the time of your visit. You should then ideally continue this daily at bath time for the following 4 weeks.

PAIN RELIEF

You can give your baby Infant Panadol Elixer 0.3-0.5 ml (6-8 drops) if needed once the Emla cream anaesthetic is wearing off. This can be repeated 6 hours later. If more than this is needed, please contact Dr. Tarr.

PREPARATION FOR CIRCUMCISION

Your baby's circumcision will be done under Emla anaesthetic cream. This is an effective and safe form of anaesthesia for circumcision. The cream however **MUST BE APPLIED THREE HOURS BEFORE** the circumcision in the following manner.

A generous amount of cream should be applied to the whole outside of the penis. Once that area is thickly coated with cream, it is wrapped with Gladwrap (to keep the cream in place and not out in the nappy where it is wasted). The Gladwrap is left open at the free end so that urine can pass through but if necessary the cream and Gladwrap can be topped up (more cream and more Gladwrap). The cream is slowly absorbed over the three hour period so that if you have used lots of cream your baby should not feel any pain. Further more the anaesthetic effect lasts for around 4 hours after the procedure and by the time the anaesthetic wears off the tissue beyond the tie has died off and there should not be any time during which your baby experiences significant pain.

Ideally try not to feed your baby for two hours before his circumcision. That way he is less likely to wee, poo or throw up, and also a feed immediately after the procedure will help settle him down rapidly.

CIRCUMCISION PROCEDURE

Your baby's circumcision will be performed using a Plastibell. This is a small plastic ring which fits inside the foreskin over the head of the penis. A ligature (string) is tied on the outside of the foreskin so that the foreskin is compressed between a deep groove on the ring on the inside and the ligature outside. There are several advantages to this Plastibell technique.

- (1) The clamping cuts off circulation of the foreskin so it should not bleed.
- (2) Because the circulation is cut off it is difficult for infection to ascend beyond that point.
- (3) The clamping cuts off the nerve supply so that it should be relatively painless afterwards.
- (4) Because the Plastibell is sitting over the head of the penis it accurately defines the level at which the circumcision occurs.
- (5) No dressings are necessary. You can bathe him normally and the ring will drop off of its own accord several days later.

Some people are under the impression there is no cutting involved but this is not so. It is normal practice to trim off the surplus foreskin above the ligature point as this skin becomes vascular and will die off anyway. Removal of this part of the foreskin is part of the Plastibell procedure so that when the procedure is over circumcision is complete.