

# intact care guide

## for parents and caregivers

Caring for an intact boy – one who has not been circumcised – is EASY. Bathe him in warm water and “only clean what is seen!”  
**NEVER FORCE HIS FORESKIN BACK.**

### what is the foreskin?

The foreskin is the skin that covers the head of the penis (the glans), doubles back, and attaches at the base of the glans. It contains blood vessels, tiny muscles, and tens of thousands of nerve endings. It is the most sexually sensitive part of the penis. The foreskin protects the glans, keeping it soft and moist.

Before birth, the foreskin and the penis grow as a single structure. The foreskin is naturally and firmly attached to the glans and is non-retractable, keeping unhealthy bacteria from entering a boy's urinary tract.

During childhood and adolescence, the foreskin separates from the glans and the opening loosens. As the boy matures into manhood, the foreskin allows the penis to achieve a full erection, and its gliding and lubricating functions make masturbation and intercourse more pleasurable for the man and his partner.

### when should a boy be able to retract his foreskin?

The age of natural, full foreskin retraction varies. The average age is around 10 years. Some boys can retract their foreskins as toddlers, and many not until late puberty. Some men's foreskins never fully retract, and this is normal, too.

**Forced foreskin retraction by an uninformed adult is the greatest penile risk boys face. It causes severe pain, bleeding and scarring, and may lead to infection and adhesions. The foreskin should be retracted only by the boy himself.**

### how can I protect my son's foreskin?

Tell your son's caregivers they must never pull back his foreskin. Stay with him during all medical visits and tell his doctors and nurses they do not have permission to retract his foreskin. You may want to ask for a “diaper on” examination.



## what should I do if my son's foreskin

### has been forcibly retracted?

Comfort him, bathe him in warm water only (no soap or bubble bath), and let his penis heal naturally. If it reattaches to the glans during the healing process, it will likely separate later, as he enters puberty. If not, any adhesions can be lysed (separated with a scalpel), with appropriate anesthetic. Do not, under any circumstances, repeat the retraction of your son's foreskin!

If you think he is developing an infection because of a forced retraction, take him to a doctor, explain what happened, and tell the doctor that you wish to preserve your son's foreskin and that under no circumstances is s/he permitted to retract it.

## how can I teach my intact son to keep his penis clean?

Teach your son to wash his genitals, just like you teach him to wash the rest of his body. Plain warm water is just fine for his penis – soaps and bubble baths should be avoided as they may lead to a yeast infection. When your son's foreskin begins to naturally separate, you can encourage him to gently retract (pull it back), rinse with warm water, and return it to its natural, forward position.

### a few other foreskin hints:

#### ballooning

When your son's foreskin is in the process of separating from the glans, you might notice "ballooning" – i.e., the space under the foreskin fills with urine just before it comes out. This tells you the separation process is occurring. Once the foreskin separates completely and the opening becomes loose enough, it will slip easily back and forth over the glans.

#### foreskin gets "stuck"

Sometimes the foreskin gets stuck in a pushed-back position. This needs to be addressed right away. Place your first and second fingers on either side of the retracted foreskin (like holding a syringe) and pushing the glans back into the foreskin with your thumb (like pushing the syringe's plunger). If unsuccessful, seek medical assistance immediately. Tell the emergency room staff that you want your son to keep his foreskin.

#### mild soreness or redness of the foreskin

may be a reaction to ammonia in urine, or to yeast overgrowth due to death of healthy bacteria on the skin. Change your baby's diaper more often, keep him out of chlorinated swimming pools, and use only warm water (no soap, shampoo or bubble baths) when bathing him. The remedy is to apply live liquid Acidophilus culture (available in health food stores) or other probiotic six times a day for three to six days.

#### urinary tract infections

Use prescribed antibiotics, in conjunction with topical liquid Acidophilus culture (see above) to prevent yeast overgrowth.

Always seek medical help if there is pain, oozing, fever, change in coloration, or bleeding of your son's foreskin.

IF YOUR DOCTOR RECOMMENDS CIRCUMCISION WITHOUT CONSIDERING LESS INVASIVE OPTIONS, GET A SECOND OPINION. THERE ARE MANY ALTERNATIVE TREATMENTS FOR PENILE PROBLEMS.

**HAVE A QUESTION NOT COVERED IN THIS FLYER?  
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