

PATIENT INFORMATION · SURGICAL AFTERCARE

Circumcision aftercare

what is normal, and what is not

Healing after circumcision takes around two to four weeks in adults and rather less in young children. Swelling, bruising and yellow film over the wound all look alarming and are all normal. This leaflet sets out what to expect, and the small number of signs that mean you should contact us.

Contact us immediately, or go to an emergency department, if there is

- **bleeding that does not stop** after 10 minutes of firm, continuous pressure
- **inability to pass urine**
- **fever, shivering, or spreading redness** up the shaft
- **increasing pain after the third day**, rather than easing
- the glans becoming **dusky, blue or cold**
- **foul-smelling discharge**, or the wound edges separating widely

Some ooze and spotting in the first 24 to 48 hours is expected. Bleeding that soaks through dressings repeatedly is not. In an emergency call 999, or go to the Royal London Hospital Emergency Department, Whitechapel Road, London E1 1FR, and bring this leaflet.

What is normal

Days 2-4

when swelling and bruising peak

7-10 days

stitches usually start dissolving

2-4 weeks

healing largely complete in adults

- **Swelling and bruising**, sometimes marked, particularly at the front of the shaft. It gets worse before it gets better.
- **A yellow or white film** over the healing edge. This is normal healing tissue, not pus. Do not try to clean it off.
- **Spots of blood** on the dressing or underwear in the first day or two.
- **Stitches** that dissolve on their own over one to three weeks, sometimes with small knots working loose.
- **Increased sensitivity** of the glans for several weeks, which settles.
- **Night-time erections**, which are uncomfortable. This is unavoidable and does not cause harm.

Looking after it

- **Pain relief** — paracetamol and ibuprofen taken regularly for the first three to five days, at the doses on the packet. Take a dose before bed.
- **Bathe daily from 48 hours** in warm water, or shower. No soap, bubble bath or antiseptic on the wound; plain water is best.
- **Pat dry gently**, or use a hairdryer on a cool setting at a distance.
- **Apply the ointment** you have been given, if any, to stop the wound sticking to underwear.
- **Wear supportive underwear** rather than loose boxers — support reduces swelling and discomfort.
- **Rest for the first 48 hours** with the area elevated where you can.

For a child

- Give pain relief regularly for the first few days rather than waiting for distress.
- **Petroleum jelly on the nappy** or on the wound prevents sticking. Change nappies frequently.
- Bathe daily; do not pull anything back or attempt to clean the wound.
- Quiet activities for a week — no straddling toys, bikes or trampolines.
- A child who is inconsolable, feverish, or not passing urine should be seen the same day.

Returning to normal

2-3 days

desk work

2 weeks

manual work, gym, swimming

4-6 weeks

sex and masturbation

Do not resume sexual activity until healing is complete and comfortable — usually four to six weeks in adults. Resuming early risks the wound reopening. Sensation typically settles over three to six months, and most men report no lasting change in sensitivity.

Why come back to us. Every circumcision we perform includes review appointments, and you can contact us directly rather than going through a call centre if something worries you. We are open seven days a week, 9am–7pm, so a wound concern on a Saturday does not mean waiting until Monday or sitting in an emergency department. If you had your procedure elsewhere and are worried about healing, we will see and assess you too.

Worried about healing? Seen the same day

Open seven days a week, including weekends, on Whitechapel Road.

[Book an appointment](#)

[or call 020 7916 0029](#)

Where to get help

Tower Bridge Hospital London

97–99 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1DT

020 7916 0029

WhatsApp **07903 284 189**

info@mhwclinic.co.uk

Open 7 days, 9am–7pm

In an emergency

Call 999, or go to the Royal London Hospital Emergency Department, Whitechapel Road, London E1 1FR.

When we are closed and it is not an emergency

Call NHS 111 or visit 111.nhs.uk.

Related: [Circumcision](#) · [Minor Surgery](#) · [Urgent Care](#) · [All patient leaflets](#)

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This leaflet is based on current NHS and British Association of Urological Surgeons guidance on circumcision and postoperative care. It is general information and does not replace advice from a clinician who has assessed you. If your symptoms change or you are worried, contact us on 020 7916 0029, call NHS 111, or call 999 in an emergency.

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