



March 2016

Reasons to Keep Your Son Whole

A publication of Doctors Opposing Circumcision
www.doctorsopposingcircumcision.org
Seattle, Washington

It's simple...

- It's his body. Only he should have the right to alter it, and only when he's old enough to have his own informed opinion. Give him the gift of his whole body – and the freedom to make his *own* decisions about how much of it he wants to keep.
- The foreskin is a normal, natural, healthy, valuable part of your son's body. The foreskin protects your son's penis and urinary opening throughout life. When he's older, his foreskin will allow him to experience sexual sensation and function the way nature intended. He's perfect just the way he is.
- By not circumcising, you'll give your son a gentle beginning, help get breastfeeding off to a good start, protect him from unnecessary pain and surgical risk, and reduce your own stress in the postpartum period.
- Your son will grow up to know that you respected his wholeness and saved him from a damaging cultural practice. He'll never have to ask, "Why didn't someone protect me?" Instead, some day he'll likely thank you!

“If it’s a boy, you have a very important decision to make...” (Really??)

If you’re a parent-to-be living in the United States, at some point someone will probably ask if you want to have your son circumcised. But anywhere else, this “very important decision” would never even come up – because most of the rest of the world does not do this to their children, and never has.

That’s right – almost all boys in Europe, Asia, and South America grow up with their genitals ***whole and unharmed***. And they grow up ***perfectly happy and healthy***.

Just like some cultures cut the genitals of girls, ***circumcision is our culture’s genital cutting practice***. All the things you might think you know about circumcision – that “it’s necessary,” “it’s cleaner,” “it’s healthier,” “everyone does it,” “he should match his dad,” and the like – are only ***cultural myths***, not facts. These myths have no scientific basis, but have been blindly passed down from the sexually repressive, pre-germ-theory medicine of the 19th century.

What ***is*** so important about this ‘decision’ is not that something terrible might happen if you leave your son’s genitals whole. (As doctors, we can tell you that that’s ***simply not true!***) What’s important is that a decision to circumcise is ***irreversible***. That means once the foreskin is gone you can never put it back. It means that any damage or complication that might happen can never be un-done. It means if your son grows up to be unhappy that someone cut off part of his penis when he was a helpless baby, what are you going to tell him?

Doctors who know the value and functions of the foreskin (it’s there for a lot of good reasons!), who have seen circumcision’s pain and complications, and who take their ethical obligation to “first, do not harm” seriously, ***reject circumcision***. They know there’s no good medical reason for it. They know that boys and men have the highest level of well-being when their bodies are left whole. And they will never ask you to make a ‘decision’ that really doesn’t have to be made. They know that ***it’s time for genital cutting of boys to stop!***

Doctors Opposing Circumcision urges parents to ***question and then reject this damaging, unnecessary, and merely cultural practice***. More and more boys are staying whole these days – perfect, just the way they were born. And that’s because more and more parents are getting truly informed.

Educate yourself – not just about circumcision, but about the natural, perfectly-designed male genitals. Reject the myths. Be empowered with the facts. Respect and protect your son’s wholeness, and his right to make his own decisions about his body.

You’ll be glad you kept him whole – and so will he.

Read below for more information on ***circumcision myths and facts***,
...and please also see our [FAQs](#) and [Care of the Intact Penis](#) page.

Circumcision myths and facts

MYTH: Everyone circumcises.

- **FACT:** Most of the world has never practiced medical circumcision. The United States is the only country that circumcises the majority of its newborn baby boys for non-religious reasons – and only for the last couple of generations. In recent decades, the rate has dropped in the US to under 60%, and much lower in some parts of the country.

MYTH: The foreskin is just a piece of skin.

- **FACT:** The foreskin is a complex, specialized tissue – a mobile, double-layered fold of skin, mucous membrane, and muscle, containing dense concentrations of erogenous nerve endings. It is an integral part of the penile skin system, not something “extra.” The foreskin amounts to half of the skin the penis is naturally designed to have (15 square inches in an adult). It has many protective and sexual functions.

MYTH: The foreskin is dirty, prone to disease, and hard to take care of.

- **FACT:** The foreskin is a normal, healthy body part. It is no more prone to disease or problems than any other body part, and is well-designed to protect itself. The occasional foreskin problem can be easily treated without surgery. Care of the foreskin is simple.

MYTH: Circumcision makes no difference in sex.

- **FACT:** Circumcision removes the most fine-touch sensitive parts of the penis, and eliminates the mobility of the penile skin sheath. This drastically changes the natural sensations and dynamics of sex, and decreases the pleasure of both the man and his partner. It also results in reduced lubrication, reduced female comfort, and tighter, possibly painful erections. Without the foreskin, sex is drastically altered from what nature intended.

MYTH: Circumcision is just a painless little snip.

- **FACT:** Circumcision is excruciatingly painful. It involves multiple tissue-damaging steps, including tearing, crushing, and slicing of a highly sensitive part of the body – often without adequate anesthesia – while the baby is restrained on a board. Babies have continuing pain during the healing period, when the wound is exposed to feces, urine, and irritation from the diaper.

MYTH: Circumcision is safe and harmless.

- **FACT:** Circumcision destroys the protective and sexual functions of the foreskin. Many men experience emotional harms later in life. Surgical complications are numerous, including bleeding, infection, meatal stenosis, and adhesions, ranging from minor to severe. Many circumcised boys will need a repeat surgery. Death and loss of the penis, although rare, do occur. Breastfeeding and the relationship of the mother and child may be impacted. The true risk rates are not fully known, and are likely underestimated.

MYTH: Circumcision is medically beneficial.

- FACT: No medical organization in the world recommends routine infant circumcision. Circumcision is neither necessary nor guaranteed to prevent any disease. A person's behavior is always going to be more important in preventing disease than whether or not he has a foreskin.

MYTH: A boy should look like his circumcised father or friends.

- FACT: There is no evidence of harm when a boy does not "match" his father, brothers, or peers. Differences are easily explained. A child's emotional well-being is best supported through good parenting, not cosmetic surgery. Many families with circumcised fathers or older brothers are choosing to keep younger sons whole, without any problems whatsoever.

MYTH: Circumcision should be the parent's choice.

- FACT: Ethically, the only person who should be choosing circumcision is the person whose body and life will be most affected by it, that is, the boy himself – and not till he is old enough to give his own fully informed consent. Baby boys deserve the same rights to body integrity and self-determination as any other human being – no matter what the beliefs or preferences of the parents.

To learn more

[Circumcision Decision-maker](#)

[The Whole Network](#)

[Peaceful Parenting](#)

[Your Whole Baby](#)

[Intact America](#)

[Circumcision and the Foreskin: Information for Expectant Parents](#)

VIDEO: [Circumcision: The Whole Story](#) Christopher Guest, MD

VIDEO: [Elephant in the Hospital](#) Ryan McAllister, PhD

Religious Resources, click [here](#).