

# Men: Should You Be Circumcised?

## Facts About Circumcision

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### What is circumcision?

Circumcision is a procedure that removes the foreskin from the penis.

### When is circumcision done?

- Circumcision is often done on newborn boys in hospital nurseries, or as part of a religious ritual, such as the Jewish *bris*.
- Muslims circumcise when boys are older, usually around age 12.
- Sometimes men get circumcised to treat certain conditions, such as when the foreskin cannot be pulled back, when the skin covering the head of the penis is red and sore, or when cancer is diagnosed.
- Doctors use pain medicine when they circumcise men. Side effects can include bleeding, infection or swelling, but overall, circumcision is a simple procedure and complications are rare.

### Why are more men being circumcised now?

- There is new evidence that circumcision offers health benefits.
- The foreskin can trap human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), as well as other bacteria and viruses that can cause sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and other infections.
- Along with having safer sex, circumcision may help keep men from getting HIV and other STDs.

### If I get circumcised, do I still have to use a condom?

YES! Always use a condom to protect against HIV and other STDs, whenever you have sex. Circumcision gives added—but not full—protection against infection.

### How can I learn more about male circumcision?

- Talk to your doctor to help decide if circumcision is a good idea for you.
- For more information visit [www.cdc.gov/hiv/resources/factsheets/circumcision.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/resources/factsheets/circumcision.htm).

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## Male Circumcision, *Continued*

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### Protect yourself and your partners against STDs, whether you are circumcised or not.

- Not having sex is the surest way to protect against HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.
- You can prevent STDs by having sex with just one partner who only has sex with you.  
*But you must be SURE that neither one of you is infected.*

### **Other ways to reduce the risk of STDs:**

- **Limit your sex partners.** The more you have, the higher your risk.
- **ALWAYS use a latex condom** for vaginal, anal and oral sex.
  - Latex condoms can prevent HIV and other STDs.
  - Condoms made of “natural” materials such as lambskin, protect against pregnancy but *not* against STDs.
  - Allergic to latex? Use polyurethane condoms.
- **Be careful with alcohol.** Drinking or getting high makes it harder to remember to use condoms. For help with substance abuse, call 1-800-LifeNet (1-800-543-3638) or call 311 and ask for LifeNet.

### More information

Free, confidential STD exams and treatment, and confidential or anonymous HIV counseling and testing, are available at Health Department STD clinics. *HIV results are available in less than an hour.*

Health insurance, proof of citizenship, and parental consent are NOT required, even for people younger than 18. Call 311 for hours and locations, or visit [nyc.gov/health/std](http://nyc.gov/health/std).