Is circumcision recommended?  
The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) does not specifically recommend circumcision as a routine procedure for newborn males. However, the AAP reports that the health benefits of circumcision outweigh the risks. They recommend that parents make their own decision about what is best for their child.

Benefits of circumcision  
Circumcision reduces the risk of:  
- Urinary tract infections during infancy  
- Penile cancer (very rare)  
- Transmitting some sexually transmitted diseases later in life

Risks of circumcision  
These include:  
- Bleeding  
- Pain  
- Small risk of infection  
- Small risk of potential injury to the urethra (tube the urine passes through).

The area may be red and tender at first, but the incision usually heals within a week. Serious complications are rare.

How should I decide if my child should be circumcised?  
For many new parents, this is a difficult decision. This handout answers some of the common questions parents have about circumcision. You may also want to watch our “Newborn Circumcision” video to help you make a decision.

If possible, try to decide before your baby is born. Making a decision about circumcision is more difficult after delivery, when you may be very tired.

Questions to consider  
The decision whether or not to circumcise your baby is a personal choice. You may want to consider some of the following factors:  
- Risks and benefits  
- Religious beliefs  
- Cultural traditions  
- Preferences about appearance

Some parents discuss whether a son will look like his father or like other boys. It may help to know that just over half of all newborn boys in the U.S. are circumcised. This number varies depending on where you live.

Finally, the effect of circumcision on men’s sexual activity and enjoyment later in life is not fully known.

How circumcision is performed?  
Babies must be healthy to be circumcised in the hospital. If the procedure is delayed for medical reasons, it can be done at a later date. General anesthesia may be required.

Getting Ready  
A shot of numbing medicine or an anesthetic cream is used on the base of your baby’s penis for pain relief. A sweetened pacifier may also be given to him for pain relief, just during the procedure.
Circumcision Methods
There are several different ways to perform a circumcision.
• Most common are the Gomco and Plastibell methods.
• The Mogen method is often used during traditional ceremonies.

The Gomco and Mogen Methods
With the Gomco or Mogen devices, the foreskin is removed from the penis. The devices look like a clamp. The procedure is complete right away.

The Plastibell Method
• A plastic ring is tied around the end of the penis.
• The foreskin is removed.
• The plastic ring stays on the end of the penis and prevents bleeding after the surgery.

Caring for an uncircumcised penis
If you decide not to circumcise your baby, taking care of his penis is easy. The foreskin will naturally separate from the tip of the penis. This may happen as early as infancy or as late as puberty. Do not force the foreskin to retract before it has separated on its own. If your son is at least 12 months old and the foreskin has separated, you can begin retracting it (pulling it back) to wash beneath it as part of his bathing routine.

Comforting your baby
It can be stressful to know that your baby is in pain. The pain after surgery is usually mild and does not last more than a day.

When to call us
Call us immediately if you notice signs of infection, such as:
• A fever (100.4°F or higher rectal temperature).
• Increased swelling, redness, or irritation.
• Pus-filled blisters.

Please call us if you notice any of the following after circumcision:
• Spots of blood bigger than a quarter in his diaper.
• Continued redness, pain, or swelling of the penis for longer than expected.
• A Plastibell ring that has not fallen off by 14 days after surgery.
• A Plastibell ring that has slipped up the shaft of the penis.
Note: You may notice yellow or whitish film on the penis. This is a normal part of healing.

Other Resources
Visit kp.org/mydoctor to:
• View most lab results and check your preventive health reminders
• Email your doctor
• Use interactive online tools to help keep you and your family healthy

Contact your facility’s Health Education Center or Department for books, videos, classes, and additional resources.

Please share this handout with anyone who takes care of your child.

Before your baby is born, try to decide about circumcision.

For more information, consult with your doctor or other health care professional.