

# Male Circumcision



HEY CHARLES,  
YOU'VE HAD AN MC.  
CAN I ASK YOU SOME  
QUESTIONS?

NO PROBLEM,  
MOSES. I'LL TELL  
YOU EVERYTHING  
YOU NEED TO  
KNOW!



**INFO BOOKLET**

**BE SMART!** There is a lot of talk about **MC**, but it is important to know the facts. This booklet can help you learn what you need to know! Read on and hear **Moses** and **Charles** discuss what MC is all about, the benefits and risks, and what happens when a man goes for MC. If you still need to know more, talk to a counselor or health provider!



**M**  
**C**

# MALE CIRCUMCISION (MC)



**Male Circumcision (MC) is the removal of the foreskin, or the extra skin that folds over and covers the head of the penis.**

MC is one of the **oldest** and **most common** medical procedures in the world. It has been practiced in Zambia and in many other places around the world for thousands of years. MC is being promoted by the Ministry of Health in Zambia as part of our nation's comprehensive HIV prevention strategy. In Zambia, MC is offered for **baby boys below 60 days old** and for **boys and men age 7 and above**. MC in Zambia is mostly commonly performed by giving a few small injections at the base of the penis to numb the area.

# BENEFITS & RISKS OF MC



WHY WOULD A GUY WANT TO HAVE HIS FORESKIN REMOVED?

MC KEEPS THE PENIS **CLEAN** AND CAN REDUCE THE CHANCE OF **STI'S**.

**MC improves hygiene and can reduce a man's chance of getting some sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV, but does not provide 100% protection.**

Male Circumcision has been clinically proven to **reduce the risk of HIV and some other STIs in men**, including syphilis, chancroid and human papilloma virus (HPV). HPV is a virus that can cause penile cancer in men and **cervical cancer in women**.

However, **MC does not provide 100% protection**, so it is important for all circumcised men who are sexually active (after the 6-week MC healing period is complete) to use condoms correctly and consistently every time.

MC also makes it easier to keep the penis clean and dry. For this reason, baby boys who are circumcised (best before 60 days of age) are much less likely to get urinary tract infections.

Male Circumcision is a very safe surgical procedure when it is done by a trained health provider. As with all surgical procedures, there are always some risks with MC, including risk of pain, bleeding, swelling, infection or reaction to the pain medicine. Speak to your provider about the possible risks, and most importantly, find a trained health provider who you feel comfortable with, and follow the instructions on how to care for yourself after the MC procedure.

# MC AND HIV



## The removal of the foreskin makes it more difficult for HIV to enter the body.

The skin on the neck of the penis under the foreskin is very **soft** and **moist**. During sex, this inner foreskin can get bruised or irritated. When this happens, tiny openings appear in the foreskin that can allow the HIV virus to enter the body. Just below the foreskin there are lots of special cells called "HIV target cells". There are more of these HIV target cells in the foreskin than any other part of the male body. These HIV target cells in the foreskin act like a sponge, taking in any HIV virus that comes in contact with the penis. After the healing process for MC is complete, the skin on the neck of the penis becomes dry and many of these HIV target cells are removed, making it more difficult for the HIV virus to enter the male body during sex.

# MC PROCEDURE



## It is always important to know your HIV status.

Before your MC procedure, you will be asked to participate in a group education session led by a trained counsellor or MC provider, where you will get more detailed information about what to expect during the MC procedure. After the group education you will have a one-on-one counselling session, where you will be encouraged to take a confidential HIV test. Knowing your HIV status before you go for MC assists in maximizing the **benefits** that MC can provide. **MC is not recommended for HIV-positive men.** If you do test positive but still want to undergo MC, you will need to be evaluated by the MC provider, to see if your immune system is strong enough.

## A clinical assessment is done before each procedure.

It is necessary for the MC provider to do a **clinical examination** of the genital area and the penis to rule out any active or recent **genital disease**. If there is active disease, it must be **treated** before any MC can be done.

## You will be given a few small injections to numb the pain

A few small injections of pain medicine will be given at the base of the penis before the procedure to numb the entire penis so that **you will feel no pain** while the foreskin is being removed.

## After the foreskin is removed you will be stitched and bandaged

Once the foreskin has been removed, the providers will use a clean needle and a special thread (called a suture) to close-up the open wound so it will heal more quickly. Then, they will gently wrap your penis in a sterile piece of gauze and tape it up against your belly.

# MC RECOVERY



## You should be able to return to work or school within 2-7 days.

You should be able to walk out of the MC centre normally. If you follow the instructions given to you by your provider, you may be able to return to light duties within one week. You will need to return to the MC centre after 2 days to have your bandage removed, and again after one week so that a provider can assess if the wound is healing properly.

## Clients must wait for six weeks before having sex or masturbating to give the wound a chance to heal properly.

Although the penis may look and feel completely healed within a few weeks, underneath the skin **the penis is still recovering for six weeks after MC**. This is why it is critical that you do not engage in any sexual activity or masturbation for six weeks after MC. If you have sex during the healing period, **you can damage your penis or delay the healing**. You are actually **more at risk** of contracting HIV and some other STIs if you have any sexual contact during the six week healing period.

Remember, **MC does not provide 100% protection**. After MC one should still protect himself and his partner by using a **condom**. Other prevention methods include abstaining from sex and being **faithful** to one partner who is faithful and HIV negative.

For more information on **MC**, or to find a service near you, call the **FREE** health Talkline by dialing **990**.



IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN MC, IT IS IMPORTANT TO FIND A **PROVIDER** WHO HAS BEEN **TRAINED** IN MC AND OFFERS **COUNSELING** AND A **SAFE, CLEAN** ENVIRONMENT. CONTACT **SFH, MSI**, OR YOUR LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH CLINIC, OR CALL THE **FREE HEALTH TALKLINE - 990 -** FOR MORE INFO.



**MARIE STOPES  
INTERNATIONAL**  
Zambia

**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE