10 Circumcision Myths – Let’s Get the Facts Straight

In an effort to sell you medical services that are not needed, hospitals have continued a practice that was adopted as a preventative measure against masturbation. Instead of abandoning the practice once Americans became more sexually liberated, doctors and nurses have begun spreading a number of falsehoods and half-truths in order to justify the amputation a fully functioning organ immediately upon birth. Yes the foreskin is an organ, it has known immunological, sexual and protective functions.

Easier to Clean

Contrary to popular myth, an intact penis is no harder to clean than a circumcised one. All it requires is simply rinsing off whenever you bathe; no soap is necessary. For care of infants, simply clean what is seen and wipe from base to tip. Never retract the foreskin on an infant because it can cause serious damage in the form of adhesions. Forcefully retracting would be like ripping your fingernail off as the foreskin is adhered to the glans and forcing it back will hurt the boy. Taking these steps to clean an intact penis is far easier than caring for a circumcised infant. A circumcision leaves an open wound vulnerable to infection, a wound that is trapped in a diaper that will likely be exposed to feces. There’s nothing cleaner about caring for a surgically altered penis; in fact, it is more difficult than cleaning an intact one.

Prevents HIV

One of the most common myths you hear with circumcision is that it prevents HIV and AIDS. This is simply not true and is

based on a handful of highly flawed studies out of Africa. Some of these studies did not take into account important factors that could affect the HIV status of the men in the study. For example, condom use was not tracked in some studies nor was the HIV status of their female partners. All three of the major studies were halted early, which can cause the effects of treatment to be greatly over exaggerated. These studies also experienced high attrition rates of participants. The potential HIV status of these lost participants could potentially skew the statistics.

Many other studies have shown that circumcision did not decrease the rates of HIV among circumcised males and in some cases, being circumcised actually increased a man’s risk of acquiring HIV. One study out of Uganda showed that the female partners of recently circumcised males were at an increased risk of contracting HIV. Another study found that circumcision increased the risk of HIV by as much as 300%, since the instruments used were not sanitized and circumcision directly aided in spreading the virus from person to person.

Prevents Cancer

Another myth of circumcision is that it helps prevent penile cancer in men and cervical cancer in their female partners. This is simply not true. Abraham Wolbarst, a doctor in the early 20th century, was one of the first to hypothesize that smegma, a secretion more prevalent in uncircumcised males than circumcised males, was carcinogenic and caused cancers. This was debunked later by studies in the 1950s. Further studies found that there was no statistical difference in rates of penile cancer between circumcised and uncircumcised males. Even the American Cancer Society has categorically stated that promoting circumcision as a method of preventing cancer is not effective. In a letter to the American Academy of Pediatrics, they wrote:

> *As representatives of the American Cancer Society, we would like to discourage the American Academy of Pediatrics from promoting routine circumcision as preventative measure for penile or cervical cancer.*
>
> *The American Cancer Society does not consider routine circumcision to be a valid or effective measure to prevent such cancers.*
>
> *Research suggesting a pattern in the circumcision status of partners of women with cervical cancer is methodologically flawed, outdated and has not been taken seriously in the medical community for decades. Likewise, research claiming a relationship between circumcision and penile cancer is inconclusive.*
>
> *Penile cancer is an extremely rare condition, effecting one in 200,000 men in the United States. Penile cancer rates in countries which do not practice circumcision are lower than those found in the United States. Fatalities caused by circumcision accidents may approximate the mortality rate from penile cancer.*
>
> *Portraying routine circumcision as an effective means of prevention distracts the public from the task of avoiding the behaviors proven to contribute to penile and cervical cancer: especially cigarette smoking and unprotected sexual relations with multiple partners. Perpetuating the mistaken belief that circumcision prevents cancer is inappropriate.*

Even though evidence has shown that circumcision does not reduce the risks of penile or cervical cancer, many people continue to perpetuate this myth.

Babies Don’t Feel the Pain

Probably one of the most dangerous myths of circumcision is that babies do not feel pain. Most of the time, baby boys are

circumcised with either no anesthetic at all or just a local anesthetic that does little to numb the pain of the foreskin being ripped back from the glans and then cut off. Many studies over the years have shown that babies do feel pain but a recent study using MRIs on infants is the most telling. This study by Oxford University found that out of the 20 areas of the brain that light up on MRIs of adults in pain, 18 will light up on MRIs of infants in pain. The study also found that babies have a lower pain threshold than adults. It is easy to see from this that yes, baby boys do feel the circumcision and are in extreme pain throughout the whole procedure.

Women Find it More Attractive

Many American women will state that they find circumcised penises more attractive than intact penises. This is simply because circumcision has been a cultural norm. This statement is not true for most women worldwide where circumcision is not the norm. As more women are educated on the benefits to their own sexual pleasure when a man is intact, this cultural norm will change.

It Prevents Urinary Tract Infections

Females are far more likely than males to get urinary tract infections. Most men will never have a urinary tract infection regardless of their circumcision status, and even if they do occur, UTIs are easily treatable.

It Doesn’t Affect Your Sex Life

Being circumcised does affect a man’s sex life. Being intact increases the sexual pleasure for both men and women. For a man, being circumcised can make it harder to reach orgasm and contribute to sexual dysfunction. Having a foreskin increases

the sensitivity for both the intact male and his partner. It provides a natural lubrication for women.

It’s a Useless Piece of Skin

The foreskin is anything but a useless piece of skin, as many proponents of circumcision will try to tell you. The foreskin has more than sixteen functions and is an important part of the human body. Functions of the foreskin include:

- Protection of the glans from injury
- Provides moisture and pH balance
- Helps prevent contaminants from entering the urethra
- Contains glands that produce antibacterial and antiviral proteins such as lysozyme
- Provides natural gliding action during sex
- Contains between 10,000-20,000 nerve endings, and seven different types of nerve endings

Even though this is just a short list of the many functions of the foreskin, it is easy to see that the foreskin is not “just a useless piece of skin”.

FGM is Different and/or Worse

The differences between female circumcision and male circumcision are debated, even among intactivists. The basic concept is the same for both: the removal of erogenous tissue. Where people disagree is in how much damage it causes in victims of either gender. Both female circumcision and male circumcision result in lasting harm. Only male circumcision is legal in Western countries. While intactivists may disagree on whether female circumcision results in worse injury than male circumcision, all intactivists can agree that no circumcision should be done on infants and children who are incapable of consent.

Phimosis is a Common Affliction that Must be Corrected with Circumcision

Phimosis is a common misdiagnosis given to parents to convince them to circumcise their sons. This condition is defined as the inability of the foreskin to retract from over the glans, or head, of the penis. Diagnosis of this condition is divided into two categories: physiologic phimosis and pathologic phimosis. What many do not realize that it is perfectly normal for an intact infant boy or young child’s foreskin to not be able to retract. In fact, on average, the foreskin is not fully retractable until later in childhood, around the beginning of puberty. As a result, many doctors will diagnose a young infant boy or toddler as having phimosis when in fact his body has not reached the biological state of development where the foreskin retracts naturally. Physiologic phimosis generally resolves itself as boys reach puberty and their foreskin begins to retract naturally. Even if it does not, phimosis does not need to be ‘fixed’ with circumcision. Pathologic circumcision is due to scarring, infection, and inflammation. Treatment may be required if it begins to interfere with urination, but a true necessity for circumcision rarely exists.

Conclusion

When it comes to deciding whether to circumcise your son or not, look at the research. All of the reasons doctors, nurses, and other medical professionals give for circumcision simply are not supported by the facts. These myths need to be debunked every time you hear them. Please help us build an intact generation by educating others on the myths of circumcision and the benefits of leaving baby boys intact.

Further Reading:

- *How To Detoxify and Heal From Vaccinations – For Adults and Children*
- *Circumcision, the Primal Cut – A Human Rights Violation*
- *Common Bad Parenting Advice You Should Ignore*
- *Doctors Against Vaccines – Hear From Those Who Have Done the Research*

Sources:

- *How to care for your intact son* – DrMomma
- *Male circumcision is not the HIV vaccine we have been waiting for!* – Future Medicine
- *Penile Cancer, Cervical Cancer, and Circumcision* – CIRP
- *American Cancer Society letter to American Academy of Pediatrics* – CIRP
- *First infant MRI study finds babies feel pain 'like adults'* – Reuters
- *The Foreskin, Circumcision, and Sexuality* – Circumstitions
- *Functions of the Foreskin: Purposes of the Prepuce* – DrMomma
- *20,000 Nerve Endings* – The Circumcision Decision
- *FGC vs MGC* – Circumstitions
- *Do You Know About Phimosis?* – Marilyn Milos, RN
- *Phimosis* – UCSF Department of Urology