

## Male Circumcision Fact Sheet

Scientists and researchers tell us that men who have had medical male circumcision (MMC) are 60% less likely to get HIV. MMC also has other benefits for men and their sexual partners.

### MMC:

- makes it easier to wash your penis
- makes you less likely to get syphilis, herpes and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- reduces your risk of getting cancer of the penis
- means your female sexual partner is less likely to develop cervical cancer

MMC is free in certain clinics.

Remember that 60% is a lot, but it is not 100% so you still need to use a condom every time you have sex.

### What is MMC?

MMC is when the foreskin is completely removed so that the head of the penis is fully exposed.

MMC offers even more protection against getting HIV because:

- there is less chance that you will tear or injure your penis during sex
- the cells on the penis that are vulnerable to HIV infection are removed
- a circumcised penis also dries more quickly after sex - this may reduce the life-span of any HIV present after sex.

### Traditional Male Circumcision

In South Africa, many people practice traditional circumcision. Traditional circumcision is seen as part of the transition from boyhood to manhood. In traditional circumcision, the cutting of the foreskin is just one part of this ritual.

Men who are circumcised in religious or traditional rituals need to make sure that they are fully circumcised if they are to take advantage of the health benefits.

### Health benefits for women

Men who have MMC are less likely to get Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) and therefore they are less likely to give it to women. HPV is the virus that causes genital warts and cervical cancer in women. By reducing the risk of HIV infection for men, MMC also reduces the risk of HIV infection for women.

## VERY IMPORTANT

You must not have sex or masturbate for at least 6 weeks after your circumcision. If you have MMC you need to see your health worker after 6 weeks and they will tell you when you can have sex again.

This is to ensure the wound fully heals. If you do have sex before the wound has healed this could damage the wound and result in an infection. It also puts you and your partner at high risk of getting HIV and STIs.

You must go to your clinic 2 - 3 days after your circumcision, to check whether your wound is healing properly. If you have any concerns after having MMC you should contact your health worker immediately.

## REMEMBER

- MMC does not reduce your risk of HIV infection if you have anal sex.
- MMC does not fully protect you from HIV and STIs even after the wound has healed. Always use a condom when having sex and stick to one partner.
- MMC does not prevent pregnancy.
- MMC does not have an HIV benefit for HIV positive men, but it does reduce the risk of HIV positive men getting STIs and penile cancer. HIV positive men may have MMC, but this does **not protect your partner from HIV**. HIV-positive men who choose to be circumcised should continue to use condoms at all times to protect their partners from HIV and themselves and their partner from **re-infection** if both partners are HIV-positive.

## For more information and where to go for free medical circumcision

The AIDS Helpline  
0800 012 322

Centre for HIV/AIDS Prevention Studies  
[www.chaps.org.za](http://www.chaps.org.za)

Anova Health Institute  
[www.anovahealth.co.za](http://www.anovahealth.co.za)  
Brothers For Life  
[www.brothersforlife.org](http://www.brothersforlife.org)

Sonke Gender Justice  
[www.genderjustice.org.za](http://www.genderjustice.org.za)

### Other useful sites:

[www.who.int/hiv/topics/malecircumcision/en/](http://www.who.int/hiv/topics/malecircumcision/en/)  
[www.malecircumcision.org](http://www.malecircumcision.org)  
[www.tac.org.za/community/node/2160](http://www.tac.org.za/community/node/2160)