

Patient information: Caring for an uncircumcised penis (The Basics)

Written by the doctors and editors at UpToDate

What does an uncircumcised penis look like? — A penis that is uncircumcised (not circumcised) has extra skin that covers its tip ([picture 1](#)). This extra skin is called the "foreskin." It protects the tip of the penis. When a baby boy is circumcised, it means he had a procedure to remove the foreskin ([picture 2](#)).

After birth, a baby boy's foreskin is stuck in place and can't be pulled back over the tip of the penis. This is normal. Over time, the foreskin will loosen up. But it can take years until the foreskin can be pulled back completely over the tip of the penis.

How do I take care of my baby's uncircumcised penis? — Until your baby is 6 months old, do **not** try to pull the foreskin back over the penis. Instead, to take care of your baby's penis, you should:

- Wash it during bath time with a gentle, nonirritating soap
- Change your baby's diaper often so that he doesn't get a diaper rash

After your baby is 6 months old, you can start to gently pull back on the foreskin when you clean the penis. It's important to pull the foreskin back only as far as it goes and not force it any further. As you pull the foreskin back, gently clean and then dry the skin underneath. When you are done, make sure to return the foreskin to its normal place so that it covers the tip of the penis.

When your son is older and can clean himself, you can teach him how to take care of his foreskin and penis. Each time he cleans himself, he should pull the foreskin back, clean and dry the skin underneath, and then return it to its normal place.

What problems can happen in an uncircumcised penis? — Different problems can happen. Some are normal and do not usually need to be treated. These include:

- White lumps that collect under the foreskin
- Swelling of the tip of the penis during urination that lasts only for a short time

Other conditions are more serious and usually need treatment. These include:

- Infections of the foreskin or penis
- Infections of the urinary tract
- The foreskin getting stuck so that it can't return to its normal place

When should I call my son's doctor or nurse? — Call the doctor or nurse if:

- Your son has pain (or seems to be in pain) when he urinates
- His penis is swollen, red, or bleeding
- His stream of urine dribbles or is not straight (goes off to one side)
- His foreskin gets stuck and can't return to its normal place
- You are worried about your son's penis
- You have questions about how to take care of your son's penis

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GRAPHICS

Uncircumcised penis



Courtesy of David G Weismiller, MD.

Graphic 69361 Version 1.0

Circumcised penis



Courtesy of David G Weismiller, MD.

Graphic 74651 Version 1.0