

The Circumcision Decision
Informed Choice – Lauren Jenks
Pathways #44, page 40



Talking Points

- ❖ An important decision to consider while pregnant is whether or not you are planning on circumcising your new arrival. There is a choice to make. Just because every male you know is circumcised does not mean you need to continue this trend.
- ❖ Have you ever seen a circumcision being performed? If your baby is going to go through it, you should see one, right?
- ❖ The majority of males in the world are NOT circumcised. The United States is the only country to perform circumcisions routinely for non-religious purposes.
- ❖ There is not a single medical association in the world that recommends circumcision.
- ❖ Author Lauren Jenks set out to research the myths associated with circumcision: better hygiene, less chance of UTIs, less chance of HIV/STDs, less chance of penile cancer/HPV, better done during infancy, needing to look like dad and needing to fit in with his peers.
 - Better hygiene: Both males and females have foreskins. In males, the foreskins are still fused to the head of the penis in infancy and through much of childhood (much like a finger nail is fused to the finger). Because it is fused, bacteria can't invade, there is no reason to retract the foreskin. Simply wipe the outside, just as you would do to a finger.
 - Once the boy can retract his foreskin on his own, he just pulls back the skin and rises with water. It is just as easy as teaching a girl to bathe, nothing difficult about it.
 - Less chance of HIV/STDs: Circumcision does not prevent the spread of HIV/STDs. In the US, a country with a high rate of circumcision, it has one of the highest rates of children and adults living with HIV and AIDS out of the post-industrial nations.
 - "Greg Millett, of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, even said the following in his address to the CDC's National HIV Prevention Conference: 'Overall, we found no association between circumcision status and HIV infection status.'" (41)

- Less chance of penile cancer/HPV: Circumcision claims to prevent penile cancer. “Did you know that more men are diagnosed and more deaths occur from male breast cancer than penile cancer?” (42) The rate of death from penile cancer is very low.
 - Better done during infancy: If an infant is circumcised during infancy there is no going back. However, if an infant is not circumcised he can choose to have the procedure later in life. There are many men who are unhappy with their circumcision and wish that they had had a choice.
 - A large majority, up to 96 percent of the babies in the United States and Canada, of circumcisions are performed WITHOUT any anesthetic. A study done on lidocaine, a local anesthetic, shows that the response to surgery was not significantly reduced by its use.
 - Jenks reminds us that “The truth of the matter is, infants cannot get adequate pain treatment, including post-op pain medication, like an adult can. They don’t understand what is happening to their bodies, and most of all, they don’t have a choice.” (43)
 - Needing to look like dad: Lauren connected with other men who grew up intact with circumcised dads, she asked them about it and they laughed, saying, “I don’t even remember what my dad’s penis looked like...and quite frankly, I wouldn’t want to remember!” Enough said?
 - Needing to fit in with his peers: Circumcision rates are falling in the US. “With nearly half of American parents or more saying no to circumcision, intact boys will no longer be in the minority. Boys growing up in today’s generation will have the same amount of peers who are intact vs. circumcised.” (44)
- ❖ Lauren has founded a grassroots nonprofit organization called the WHOLE Network for parents to find accurate information and support.

Resources

Full references for each article are available at <http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/references.html>

The Whole Network: <http://www.thewholenetwork.org/>

Resources and references for the article:

<http://www.thewholenetwork.org/apps/search?q=The+Circumcision+Decision>

Free articles, pamphlets and info sheets: <http://www.thewholenetwork.org/free-stuff.html>

FB Page: <https://www.facebook.com/WholeNetwork>

Support Group Locations: <http://www.thewholenetwork.org/locations.html>

Intact Friendly doctors: <http://www.thewholenetwork.org/intact-friendly-doctors>

Additional Organizations: <http://www.thewholenetwork.org/organizations.html>