



Uncircumcised Penis Care

Basics

If your son is uncircumcised, then he will have a layer of skin (foreskin) covering the head of the penis. Usually the foreskin remains tightly adherent to the tip of the penis for the first few years of life. In most boys, the foreskin separates, or retracts, from the tip on its own by age 5. Sometimes, the foreskin may not retract fully until puberty. This is still normal—just check with your child’s doctor if you have concerns. You should NEVER forcefully pull the foreskin back to clean the penis. Doing so can lead to complications, including significant pain, bleeding, and tears in the skin.

Cleaning Tips

- Prior to separation of the foreskin (typically before 5 years of age), simply wash the area gently with mild soap and water during bath-time. Do not try to force the foreskin back to clean underneath.
- Once the foreskin has separated, gently pull the foreskin away from the tip of the penis and wash underneath with mild soap and water. Always push the foreskin back over the head of the penis afterward. Cleaning the foreskin should be part of the daily routine.
- Note that, as the foreskin separates, dead skin cells, called smegma, can accumulate. These may look like white lumps underneath the foreskin. Smegma is normal and will go away on its own.

Complications

- Phimosis occurs when the foreskin remains tight and difficult to pull back after puberty.
- Paraphimosis occurs if the foreskin is pulled back and gets “stuck” (cannot be manually pushed back over the head of the penis).
- Always seek medical attention