

INFORMANT

EDUCATING A NEW GENERATION — FOR THE WELL-BEING OF ALL CHILDREN

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“Do You Want Him Circumcised?” **Ten Facts Pregnant Parents Must Know**

- 1. A foreskin on your baby's penis is *normal*.** The normal male penis is not flawed. Every mammal is born with a foreskin.
- 2. A foreskin provides natural protection to his penis.** It is the “eyelid” of the penis. Removing it from your son means this protection for him is lost for life.
- 3. Your son's genitals are cleansed easily with water.** Circumcision won't make bathing him any easier. And remember, any retraction of the foreskin can damage your son's penis.
- 4. Circumcision will be very painful for your son, during *and* after.** *Every* medical study of infant pain supports this fact.
- 5. Your son's pain will be your doctor's gain \$\$\$.** Your doctor and hospital probably won't discourage a procedure paid for by insurance. They are in business to make money!
- 6. Circumcision reduces the function of the penis.** Some natural sensitivity is lost forever.
- 7. Circumcision is a risky surgical procedure.** Babies just like yours suffer trauma, infections and hemorrhaging from the procedure.
- 8. Now performed less often in the United States.** Nationally, 40% of the boys born today leave the hospital intact.
- 9. Medically unnecessary.** A foreskin is not any more prone to disease than any other body part. It is treatable *if*, and when, diseased.
- 10. Present on 80% of adult males worldwide.** Circumcision is an anatomical *deprivation*. Do you really want your son to “lack” like Daddy?

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

A common excuse given for circumcision by parents today is based upon what they fear may happen someday in a locker room. Locker room fantasies have captured the imagination of many expectant parents. How can they ever hope to teach their children to say “no” to drugs when they cannot say “no” to imaginary bullies in their son's hypothetical locker room?

Can circumcision ever make raising a teenage son easier? Children depend on parents to teach them self-respect and positive body image. Circumcision does not free them from this responsibility that will present itself in many ways. Do parents really believe that they can surgically remove this challenge?

On behalf of all the children, thanks! Norm Cohen, Director

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Why I Am Restoring— No Stretch of the Imagination

by Eric J. Wolff

What possesses a 30-year-old man to begin a daily routine of taping and stretching the skin on his penis in an attempt to restore his foreskin?

It's definitely *not* for the potential entertainment such an endeavor can provide—it's not fun and it takes a great deal of time and effort.

I discovered non-surgical foreskin restoration while surfing the Web one night. I always thought restoration would involve some sort of surgery. That didn't sound like a very good option to me since a source for the additional skin evaded my imagination.

Stretching the remaining penile skin made sense and didn't look too hard to do. The testimonials I read from guys who were already restoring insisted that if you experience any pain, you're doing something wrong. They also said the new sensations are unbelievable.

Did I *really* want to make another alteration to my genitals? Could I actually make things worse?

When I was in my mid-twenties, I began to notice that sex wasn't as fantastic as it had been in the past. I actually chalked it up to "aging". At 26 years old! My sensitivity had already decreased to the point where I was having difficulty climaxing.

I decided to try restoration. Coincidentally, around the same time I decided to try restoring, I ran across Jim Bigelow's book, *The Joy of Uncircumcising*. It was a great relief. Not only was it reassuring to read about other men overcoming the very problems I was experiencing, but I also had a clear and concise set of instructions on the various methods of foreskin restoration. I read all 237 pages in two evenings.

I began with one of the simplest techniques, the "tape ring". The basic idea is to pull the shaft skin forward enveloping the glans. I placed a narrow band of medical tape around the skin, just tight enough to keep the skin pulled forward,

but not so tight that I would cut off circulation.

The instant I let the skin go, I knew I was on the right track. For the first time in 30 years, a protective layer of skin covered my glans. The feeling of comfort and security that swept over me is indescribable!

I was beginning to understand what I had been missing. (This triggered a whole bunch of emotions for which I was totally unprepared.) Would simply stretching my remaining skin over my glans *really* reverse 30 years of desensitization?

I got my answer the very next weekend. Without going into unnecessary detail, suffice it to say that when Terry and I were together, I felt sensations I had *never* felt before—even ten years earlier as a much younger man! And this after having my glans covered for only two weeks. There would be no turning back now.

Discovering the incredible benefits of having an intact foreskin doesn't come without drawbacks. Every new sensation I am feeling is one I was purposefully deprived of before. Not a day goes by that I don't have some degree of anger or outrage that some man in my past took it upon himself to deny me the right to my foreskin *for no rational reason at all!*

The daily taping and strapping of my growing foreskin is not really a problem, but it's far from pleasant.

My mother still feels guilty about consenting to the procedure for both of her sons—though the social pressure to circumcise was at it's greatest in the mid-1960's. I have long since forgiven my parents for what happened to me when I was just hours old. I understand that they didn't mean me any harm. However, they still suffer with the results—as my brother and I do. Terry has been supportive of my restoration efforts, but freely admits not having a clue why restoring is such an issue to me.

Every time a friend gets pregnant, I go through tremendous anxiety over how to

approach them about saving their child from the same lifelong sentence that was summarily handed down to me. And, no matter what I do, I can *never* regain what it took only a few minutes for someone to cut away from me. I am, however, doing the *best* I can.

I continue to work on my own healing through foreskin restoration and through group "therapy" meetings with other injured and restoring men. I am committed to helping NOCIRC of Michigan with their efforts to save the next generation from this horrible procedure.

Eric Wolff is a Jewish man who has been restoring for two years. He is a life-long Ann Arbor resident. He can be reached at (313) 665-8302 or e_wolff@msn.com.

Restoration Support Group Now Meeting

A monthly support group meets once a month in metropolitan Detroit for men seeking moral and technical support in foreskin restoration.

Interested men, please call (810) 642-5703 for more information.

The Informant (ISSN 1092-020X) is the quarterly newsletter of **NOCIRC of Michigan**. It represents our commitment to provide educational information in this state and to activists everywhere. Articles, comments and questions are always welcome.

NOCIRC of Michigan Experts In Caring

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Happily Intact Boys and Their Mommies Who Knew Better!

“While planning our third home birth we were fortunate to learn more about circumcision. Our first two children were daughters, but I had always thought that circumcision was the “normal” thing to do. After all, no one even questioned it!

Through my midwives and Marilyn Milos’ appearance on *The Phil Donahue Show*, I learned that circumcision is painful and unnecessary. It would also rob our son of sensitivity and pleasure. The foreskin really was important!

Our son Mark is now 7 years old and has never had a problem with his foreskin. While he can be one of the toughest little fighters in his karate class, I feel that he is more sensitive and aware of others’ feelings than most boys his age. Could there be a connection? Letting him be natural and intact is one of the best decisions we have ever made as parents. It’s a gift he’ll have forever.”

Nora Plank-Champe

“Joseph is the fourth son that we adopted. Two of his older brothers have intact foreskins. His other brother was circumcised before being placed with us. I have seen first-hand how easy it is to care for a baby’s intact penis and how well the foreskin serves to protect the sensitive little glans from anything that could contaminate or irritate it. In comparison, I have also seen how having the foreskin gone created a wound that caused a great deal of discomfort for a long period of time, and also created the potential for such problems as infection, and ulcerations of the urinary opening.

My two intact sons’ penises never caused them pain in any way or required any care other than cleaning the outside of the foreskin. My circumcised son’s required special attention to cleaning and, often, the application of various ointments. There was no question that Joseph’s foreskin would remain intact and healthy!”

Darillyn Starr

“I began questioning circumcision when my second son Eric was born five years ago. Eric was brought to me just minutes after his surgery and he was sobbing so hard. I never saw an infant scream like that.

I decided to do some research on circumcision and was horrified at what I learned. I learned that I had mutilated my boys for no reason. I was not informed. I did it because that is what everyone did.

When I became pregnant with my third son, I knew he would not go through what his brothers did. Seven months ago I gave birth to a beautiful, perfect angel. Justin is still beautiful and intact the way God created him.

I have great remorse for what I did to my first two children because I did not question the surgery and hope they can understand my ignorance some day.”

Amy Moiles

LOCAL NEWS

Sponsors Needed

Would you like to help get *The Informant* out? Then please consider sponsoring an issue. Sponsors cover the costs of printing and mailing our newsletter. We reach *nine hundred* interested readers. As a sponsor, we’ll also print your ad.

Please call (810) 642-5703 to help.

“Whose Body, Whose Rights?” for Sale

NOCIRC of Michigan *Informants* may purchase the award-winning *Whose Body, Whose Rights?* at a special price of \$25 (regularly \$35) while supplies last.

This video is an excellent educational tool for presentation to classes or groups and for loaning to expectant parents.

More Baby Faces Wanted !

Please send us a picture of your intact baby boy with a letter about your decision to keep him intact. We’ll print his darling face in an upcoming issue!

NOCIRC of Michigan

PO Box 333, Birmingham, MI 48012

NOCIRC OF MICHIGAN

NOCIRC of Michigan is a consumer rights advocacy group helping parents understand that circumcision is harmful to their children.

We educate mothers, fathers and health care providers in Michigan about the harm of circumcision and about proper intact care. We protect consumers from false medical claims. We actively promote the benefits of normal genitalia.

We are a non-profit group consisting of health care professionals and dedicated lay people. We are committed to effective education, advocacy and activism on behalf of children to protect them from harm. We are part of a worldwide organization dedicated to ending all forms of male and female genital mutilation.

Any health care provider in Michigan can receive these *free* pamphlets in bulk for distribution to their clients: "Answers to Your Questions About Infant Circumcision" and "Answers to Your Questions About Your Young Son's Intact Penis". Please call (810) 642-5703 to order.

Female Genital Mutilation Now Illegal in the United States

The 1997 appropriations bill signed by President Clinton, which took effect in April, includes a rider that outlaws female genital mutilation (FGM) for anyone under 18. The penalties are fines and jail for up to five years.

The bill directs the Immigration and Naturalization Service to educate immigrants from those countries in which FGM is practiced about the potential health and legal consequences of the procedure, and urges U.S. directors of financial institutions to oppose loans and grants to any nation that practices FGM.

For those who would dismiss any comparisons between male circumcision and FGM, the U.S. law does not permit such distinctions. Any cutting of a girl's genitals is a felony. Furthermore, the law explicitly prohibits any exclusions based upon her parents' personal beliefs in any custom or ritual.

In the U.S., at least 10,000 girls from immigrant communities are at risk of this practice. Today, there are more than 114 million women worldwide who have undergone some form of FGM.

NOCIRC of Michigan Exhibit Dates

Volunteers are needed to help staff NOCIRC information tables at the exhibitions listed below. Come and enjoy sharing our message with others!

Please call (810) 642-5703 to volunteer.

- ◆ **Sunday, April 27th**
Babies-To-Be Show
Northfield Hilton Hotel,
Troy, MI
12:00 pm to 3:30 pm
- ◆ **May 25th to June 7th**
Virtual Stand for Children
at www.stand.org
plus various state-wide meetings,
Stand for Children, Michigan
- ◆ **Saturday, June 7th**
Vaccine Information Conference
Holiday Inn Hotel,
Livonia, MI
11:30 am to 3:30 pm
- ◆ **July 23rd to July 26th**
Ann Arbor Art Fair
downtown,
Ann Arbor, MI

BAD IDEAS FROM THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

"Routine circumcision does not necessitate handling of the penis by the child himself and therefore does not focus the male's attention on his own genitals. Masturbation is considered less likely."

Dr. Alan F. Guttmacher, M.D.
"Should the Baby Be Circumcised?",
Parents' Magazine, 1941 Vol. 16, p. 26, 76-78

TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT CIRCUMCISION

Become An Informant

A tax-deductible membership fee of \$25 or more makes you a NOCIRC of Michigan **Informant**. Help us to educate parents!

PO Box 333, Birmingham, MI 48012

NAME:

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