

WE ARE RESPONSIBLE

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TIME TO GET WISE – CIRCUMCISE!

GOVERNMENT is making medical male circumcision freely available to all those who want to be circumcised in its efforts to reduce new HIV infections. Scientists found out that in countries where male circumcision is performed there are lower levels of sexually transmitted infections and HIV. In South Africa only about 45% of men say that they are circumcised and our HIV prevalence rate is above 15%. In Nigeria, where more than 80% of men are circumcised, their HIV prevalence rates are below 5%. Studies in South Africa, Kenya and Uganda showed that male circumcision reduces the risk of HIV infection by 60%.

“Medical male circumcision forms part of an intensified effort by government to reduce new HIV infections and improve men’s sexual and reproductive health,” said Dayanund Loykissoonal of the Department of Health.

“In addition to scaling up voluntary medical male circumcision government will increase the number of male and female condoms available; intensify efforts to make sure that all pregnant women are able to prevent HIV being transmitted to their babies and that all men and women who need treatment will get treatment”, he said. This is in line with the government’s HIV Counselling and Treatment campaign that was launched by the president in April.

Over the next five years the government is aiming to circumcise at least 5,6 million men to reduce the number of new HIV infections and save the country billions of rands in future treatment-related costs.

In KwaZulu-Natal, medical male circumcision is available in a number of hospitals across the province. The province has also initiated camps where young men are recruited from local communities to be circumcised. As part of these camps they are educated on cultural issues, HIV prevention and responsible manhood.

In Gauteng, Free State, Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape a number of hospitals and community health centres have started to offer medical male circumcision.

Non-governmental organisations such as CHAPS, Right to Care, Maternal, Adolescent, and Child Health and the Society for Family Health are working together with government to provide medical circumcision to men.

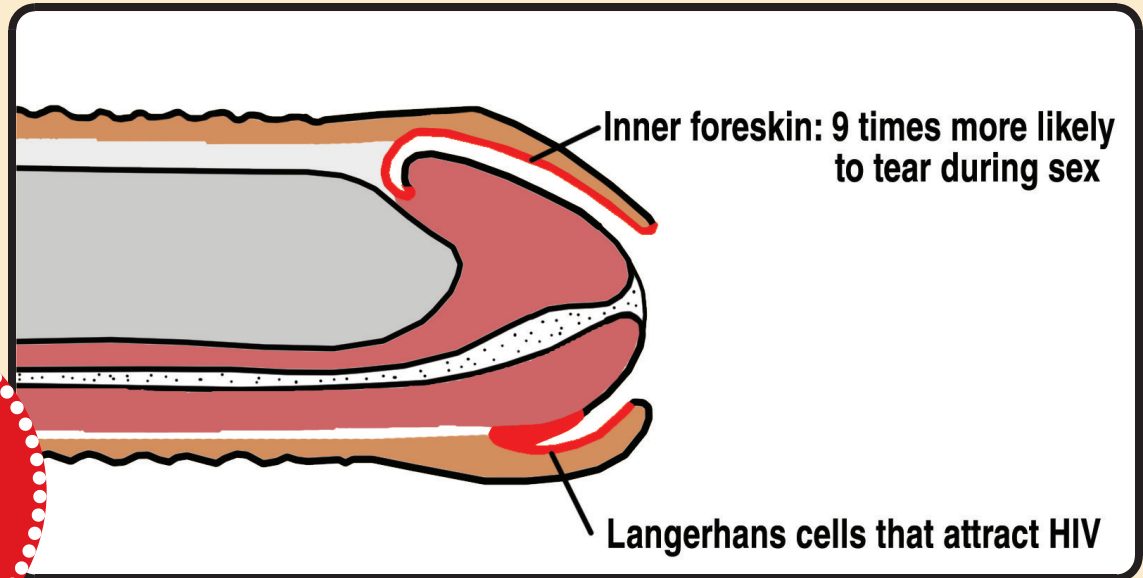
Government is working with traditional leaders, healers and surgeons to make them part of the plan to roll out safe, medical male circumcisions.

All men who choose to be medically circumcised will also be tested for HIV so that they can know their HIV status. They will be counselled on what medical male circumcision does and does not do. They will be examined for sexually transmitted infections and get proper treatment if they need it. The circumcisions will be done by trained doctors and nurses in public health facilities.

It is important for all men who are circumcised not to have sex for six weeks after being circumcised so as to prevent the wound from getting infected and coming into contact with HIV while they are still healing.



Make the call – If you are interested in finding out where to get medically circumcised phone the Aids Helpline to refer you to a health facility closest to you: 0800 012 322.



How medical mail circumcision reduces your risk of HIV.

What brothers need to know about it . . .

MALE CIRCUMCISION has been practised for centuries for religious or cultural reasons. Jews and Muslims circumcise their boys shortly after birth, while in South Africa the Xhosa and other cultural groups have traditionally practised male circumcision as a rite to manhood when boys are in their teens or early 20s.

Medical male circumcision is the full removal of the foreskin, fully exposing the head of the penis and it’s performed in a hospital or clinic by a doctor or a nurse.

Medical male circumcision gives you a lifetime of benefits, including better hygiene and reduced risk of sexually transmitted infections and HIV. It reduces your risk of penile cancer and your partner’s risk of cervical cancer.

In some cultures only a part of the foreskin is removed or a slit is made in the foreskin. If this is the case you will need to undergo surgery again to make sure that the foreskin is fully removed.

are given painkillers to help manage any mild pain or discomfort you may have when the anaesthetic wears off.

You will be told how to keep the wound clean while it heals and get a medical certificate should you need to take time off from work or studies to recover. Then you can go home.

For the first few days after the surgery, you must keep the dressing on – and dry.

You will need to have a follow-up visit to check for any complications.

After this, you should gently wash your penis with soap and water, using a soft cloth. The stitches will fall out after 10 to 14 days.

Like with any surgical procedure, there can be problems after a circumcision, but in most cases these are slight, such as reaction to the pain injection, minor bleeding, or some swelling and pain.

It takes six weeks for the wound to heal. During this time you must not have sex or masturbate. If you do, the wound will take longer to heal, you may get another infection and run a higher risk of HIV transmission.

How does it work?
Removing the foreskin reduces the risk of HIV transmission as the skin on the inside of the foreskin is very soft and nine times more likely to tear during sex. This not only makes sex uncomfortable but also gives HIV an entry point. Some men who have foreskins may experience a tightening of the foreskin which causes great discomfort.

Within the foreskin are cells – called Langerhans cells – these cells attract HIV, making it easier for the virus to enter the body.

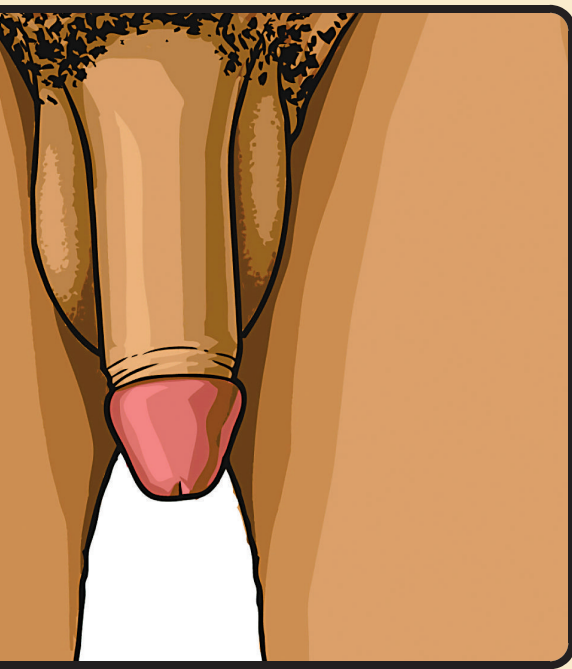
Men who are not circumcised are also more likely to get sexually transmitted infections.

What it does not do . . .
Getting circumcised **ONLY REDUCES** the risk of HIV infection. Male circumcision does not prevent unwanted pregnancies, does not fully protect from HIV and does not reduce the risk of HIV infection from anal sex whether with men or women. If you are positive you can still reinfect or infect your partner with HIV even if you are circumcised. This means you must still be very careful. If you are circumcised you should still use a condom every time you have sex and keep to one sexual partner.

What happens if I choose circumcision?
Medical male circumcision takes place in a hospital, clinic, mobile clinic or camp. It is done by a trained doctor or nurse. You can phone the Aids Helpline to find out where in your province you can get medically circumcised.

When you arrive at the clinic or hospital you will get counselled alone or as part of a group. This will explain what circumcision is and how it works. You will be counselled and tested for HIV and examined for other sexually transmitted infections.

The full removal of the foreskin is done under local anaesthetic, so besides a small injection there is no pain. It takes only about 30 minutes. Once the foreskin is removed the wound is stitched and dressed and you



A circumcision removes the foreskin from the penis.



Doctor Thabo Mashigo preparing his circumcision kit. Waiting for his operation is the patient at the Bophelo Pele male circumcision centre in Orange Farm. Photo by Leon Sadiki

CHAPS in Orange Farm leads the way

IT was in Orange Farm, south of Joburg, that a globally important study was done five years ago on the effectiveness of medical male circumcision in preventing HIV transmission.

The study found that being circumcised can reduce a man’s chances of contracting HIV by up to 60% – explaining why communities that do not practise circumcision tend to have higher HIV infection rates.

Following on the study was Bophelo Pele, a medical male circumcision clinic in Orange Farm that is run by the Centre

for HIV and AIDS Prevention Studies – or CHAPS – with the Anova Health Institute and partnered by the Society for Family Health.

CHAPS chief executive officer Dirk Taljaard said proudly that since the clinic opened its doors in 2008, an amazing 23 000 circumcisions have been performed there.

But how is it that Bophelo Pele has been so successful? Taljaard said there are a number of possible reasons.

Firstly, CHAPS conducts a very successful HIV and health outreach pro-

For more information please call, or make a missed call or send a Please Call Me to either 079 891 8733 or 071 605 9859 and CHAPS will call you back.

gramme. The NGO conducts many activities, including door-to-door visits, actions in shopping malls, schools and churches, pamphlet campaigns and clinic visits.

CHAPS had also discovered that men have always been willing to be circumcised for two reasons: health and the belief that women prefer circumcised men for hygiene reasons.

CHAPS is currently expanding its operations to other centres like in Zola, Soweto and a third is planned for Soshanguve, Tshwane early next year.

Doctors and nurses perform a safe, medical circumcision on a man. These circumcisions help reduce the chance of HIV infections in men.

The kindest cut to protect the health of a nation . . .

JUST as great King Shaka stopped the practise of male circumcision to keep the Zulu warriors healthy, two centuries later King Goodwill Zwelithini has reintroduced the practice to keep the Zulu nation healthy.

Holiday circumcision camps have been introduced by the king, and the provincial Health MEC Dr Sibongiseni Dhlomo. The camps are supported by local and traditional leaders and local NGOs that have combined medical male circumcision with cultural and social activities.

The camps and the province’s hospitals and clinics are providing medical male circumcision.

Boys are recruited to the camps through schools, clinics, advertising on local radio stations and newspapers, and by local leaders.

Before coming to the camps the boys are encouraged to test for HIV, other infections or any reason why they cannot be circumcised. On the first day of the camps the boys are told about male circumcision, condoms, health, hygiene and sexual and reproductive health. They are then medically circumcised.

On the second day a cultural programme educates the young men about preventing HIV, unwanted pregnancies, gender-based violence and on the roles and responsibilities of men.

All participants get 100 condoms, information on how to care for the wound and not to have sex for six weeks after surgery.

To date 35 camps have been held in all 11 districts of KZN and over 4 000 boys have been circumcised.

Camps will be taking place during December for boys and young men that want to undergo circumcision. The following are the dates:
 * Umkhanyakude (Bethesda /Jozini) 2 December
 * Amajuba 3 December
 * Amajuba (Waterval prison) 9 December
 * UThungulu 10 December
 * Ethelwini (KwaMashu) 13, 14 December
 * Umkhanyakude 13, 14, 15 December.

What the brothers have to say

BROTHERS for Life spoke to two brothers. They are from Orange Farm and told about their experiences of being circumcised.

Here’s what they had to say: “I’ve been wishing to do this a long time ago already,” said Teboho, of Sebokeng. He said he had chosen to undergo medical circumcision, in hygienic surgical conditions, for health reasons.

“You’ve got plenty of diseases out there,” he said. “It’s very important to do this and not contract diseases.”

He said he was “feeling all right” only two days after his surgery. While he had experienced a little pain on the evening after the operation it went away. Katiso, of Evaton, said he chose to be circumcised for health reasons: “There

are many diseases and I want to be protected.”

He said his parents had wanted him to go to initiation school . . .

“But I told them I didn’t want to do that. I said I wanted to go to the clinic and they agreed,” he said.

His procedure was painless but he experienced a little discomfort on the evening after his operation once the anaesthetic wore off. Four days after his operation, Katiso had only this to say of his experience: “I’m glad.”

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