

# WHAT IS THE MALE CIRCUMCISION PROCESS?

## You have the right to safe medical circumcision in a hygienic and clean medical facility

Medical circumcision is the most hygienic, safest way to be circumcised, and the only way to ensure that you get the full sexual and health benefits. Medical circumcisions are performed at health facilities throughout South Africa, such as community health centres and district hospitals.

## You have the right to counselling and HIV testing before undergoing circumcision

When you arrive at the clinic or hospital, you will receive group counselling and you can voluntarily undergo counselling and testing for HIV, before undergoing circumcision. You will also be examined for sexually transmitted infections and foreskin abnormalities.

## Your circumcision will be performed by a trained health provider and it's painless and quick

The circumcision will be done by a trained health care provider (doctor or nurse) who is specially trained to perform this kind of procedure. It is done under local anaesthetic, so besides a small injection, there is no pain and it takes only about 30 minutes.

The wound is then stitched and dressed, and you are given painkillers to help manage any mild pain or discomfort you may have when the anaesthetic wears off. You are also given instructions on how to keep the wound clean while it heals, as well as a medical certificate should you require time off from work or studies while you recover.

And then you can go home.

## You must not have sex until the wound has fully healed

The healing process takes six weeks, during which time you may not have sex or masturbate. If you do, the wound will take longer to heal completely – and you run a higher risk of HIV transmission.

For the first few days, you must keep the dressing on and dry. You will then return to the health care provider for a follow-up visit and to have the dressing removed. After this, you should gently wash your penis with soap and water, using a soft cloth. The stitches will also fall out after 10 to 14 days.

## If you have concerns, speak to your clinic or doctor

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. With proper care, these issues are easily treated. Should you have any concerns, go to your clinic or doctor.

# WHAT MALE CIRCUMCISION DOES NOT DO

## Male circumcision:

- does not prevent pregnancy
- confers only partial protection against HIV infection
- does not benefit the partner of an HIV-positive man
- does not reduce the risk of HIV infection during anal sex

Getting circumcised does not prevent pregnancy and **ONLY REDUCES** the risk of HIV infection. This means that you cannot let your guard down. If you are circumcised, **you should still use a condom** every time you have sex, keep to one sexual partner and test for HIV to know your status so that you can make the best decision for your health.

If you are HIV-positive, you may also be circumcised, but this does **not protect your partner from HIV**. If you test positive for HIV you should have **your CD-4 cell count** taken to determine the strength of your immune system and you will be referred to care and support services. HIV-positive men who choose to be circumcised should continue to use condoms at all times to protect their partners from HIV and themselves and their partner from **re-infection** if both are HIV-positive.

**Circumcision does not reduce your risk of HIV infection if you have anal sex.**

Medical male circumcision is the best option for your sexual and reproductive health. Circumcision offers a lifetime of benefits including better hygiene, reduced

risk of sexually transmitted infections and HIV. It reduces your risk of penile cancer and your partner's risk of cervical cancer.

Quite simply, getting a medical circumcision is the right thing to do.

## For more information contact:

The AIDS Helpline  
0800 012 322

The Department of Health  
[www.doh.gov.za](http://www.doh.gov.za)

Brothers For Life  
[www.brothersforlife.org](http://www.brothersforlife.org)

Sonke Gender Justice  
[www.genderjustice.org.za](http://www.genderjustice.org.za)

# GET CIRCUMCISED. KNOW THE FACTS.

## SMS "MMC" TO 43740

Standard SMS rates apply.



health  
Department of Health  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



# WHAT IS CIRCUMCISION?

Medical circumcision is the full removal of the foreskin, fully exposing the head of the penis. Getting circumcised is the right thing to do for your health as it:

- improves your hygiene as it is easier to keep the head of the penis clean
- reduces your risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as chancroid, syphilis, genital warts and herpes
- reduces your risk of HIV infection as it decreases the risk of tearing and bruising that can be an entry point for HIV
- removes certain cells within the foreskin that act as an entry point for HIV
- lowers the risk of penile cancer
- reduces your partner's risk of cervical cancer

All men have the right to safe and hygienic medical male circumcision services.

In South Africa these are available at community health centres and district hospitals all over the country.

In some cases, you may have been circumcised for religious or cultural reasons. Certain religions circumcise their boys soon after birth. Some cultures circumcise their young men as part of an initiation process that marks the passage from boyhood to manhood. Men who are circumcised for religious or cultural reasons need to make sure that they are fully circumcised if they are to take advantage of the health benefits.



If you are to get the full health benefits of male circumcision it is important for you to know whether you are:

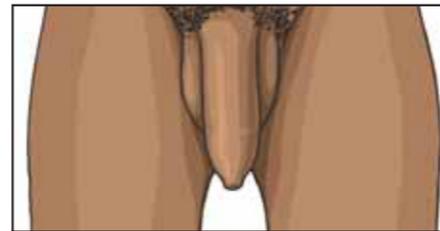
- uncircumcised
- partially circumcised - where only a part of the foreskin has been removed or a slit has been cut in the foreskin
- fully circumcised - where the entire foreskin has been removed



**Circumcised penis**

### Full health benefits:

- ✓ the foreskin has been completely removed, under medical conditions, from the head of the penis
- ✓ it is easier to keep clean
- ✓ eliminates bruising and tearing during sex
- ✓ cells that attract HIV have been removed
- ✓ reduces the risk of HIV infection by eliminating tearing and bruising
- ✓ lower risk of STIs and diseases
- ✓ reduces your partner's risk of cervical cancer



**Uncircumcised penis**

### No health benefits:

- the foreskin covers the head of the penis and it's more difficult to keep clean
- the skin inside the foreskin is soft, and prone to bruising and tearing during sex that allows an entry point for HIV and can cause discomfort during sex
- the foreskin contains cells that act as an entry point for HIV
- there is a higher risk of HIV infection
- higher risk of STIs and diseases that affect uncircumcised men
- men are more likely to get the Human Papilloma Virus which they transmit to their partner, which increases their partner's risk of cervical cancer

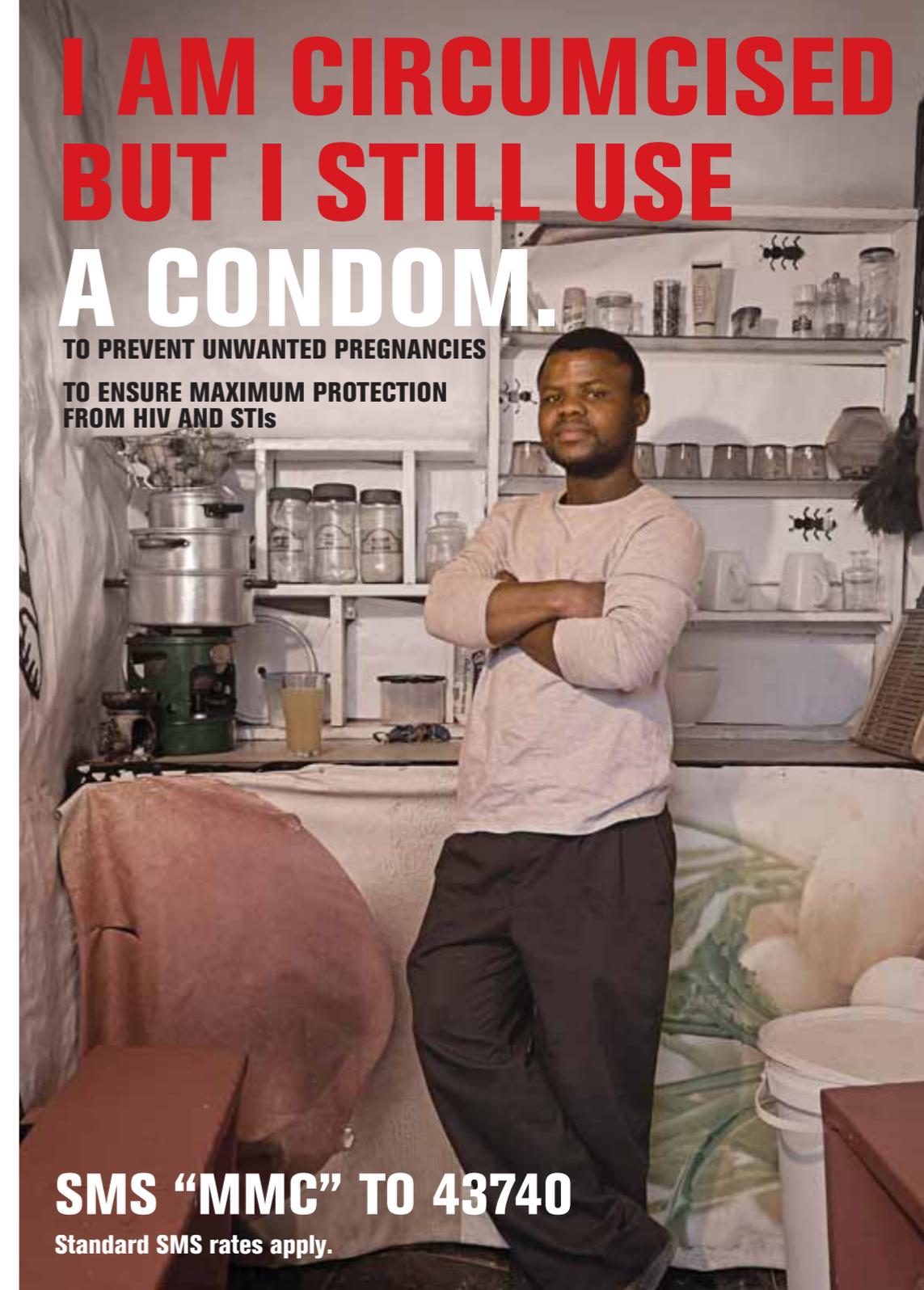


**Partially circumcised penis**

# I AM CIRCUMCISED BUT I STILL USE A CONDOM.

**TO PREVENT UNWANTED PREGNANCIES**

**TO ENSURE MAXIMUM PROTECTION  
FROM HIV AND STIs**



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