

Keeping Baby Healthy:

Care for an uncircumcised male infant or child

My son is not circumcised. When will his foreskin retract?

- In the first several years of life your son's foreskin will separate from the tip of the penis.
- Some foreskins separate soon after birth or even before birth, but this is rare.
- It may take a few weeks, months, or years. Once this happens, the foreskin can be pulled back away from the tip of the penis. This is called foreskin retraction.
- **Foreskin retraction should never be forced.** Until the foreskin fully separates, do **NOT** try to pull it back.
- Forcing the foreskin to retract before it is ready can cause severe pain, bleeding, and tears in the skin.
- Most boys will be able to retract their foreskins by the time they are 5 years old, yet others will not be able to until the teen years.
- As a boy becomes more aware of his body, he will most likely discover how to retract his own foreskin.

What happens when the foreskin does separate from the head of the penis?

- When the foreskin separates from the head of the penis, skin cells (called smegma) are shed.
- These skin cells (smegma) may look like white, pearl-like lumps under the foreskin.
- Smegma is normal and nothing to worry about.

Cleaning the penis

- In the first few months, you should simply clean and bathe your baby's uncircumcised penis with soap and water, like the rest of the diaper area.

- Initially, the foreskin is connected by tissue to the glans, or head, of the penis, so you shouldn't try to retract it.
- No cleansing of the penis with cotton swabs or antiseptics is necessary
- If your son's foreskin separates before he reaches puberty, an occasional retraction with cleansing beneath will do.
- Once your son starts puberty, he should clean beneath his foreskin as part of his daily routine, just like washing his hair and brushing his teeth.
- You should watch your baby urinate occasionally to make sure that the hole in the foreskin is large enough to permit a normal stream.
- If the stream consistently is no more than a trickle, or if your baby seems to have some discomfort while urinating, consult your pediatrician.

Teach your son to clean his foreskin in the following way:

Step 1: Gently pull the foreskin back away from the end of the penis.

Step 2: Rinse underneath the foreskin with soap and warm water.

Step 3: Pull the foreskin back over the penis.



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