



Pediatric Surgical  
Associates, Ltd.

## Care for the Uncircumcised Penis

All boys are born with a covering (foreskin) over the head (glans) of the penis. Some boys are circumcised, and the skin covering the glans is removed. Other boys are not circumcised, leaving the skin that covers the glans of the penis intact. The decision to circumcise is a personal decision and may depend on many factors. These can include the parents' preference, religion, or where they are born.

In an uncircumcised boy, the foreskin will gradually begin to separate from the glans. This may happen right after birth, or it may take several years. When the foreskin starts to retract you may notice a white, cheesy material called smegma (skin cells that are shed) between the layers of skin. This is normal and not a sign of infection. Retracting or pulling back the foreskin from the head of the penis should **never** be forced. There are natural adhesions that attach the foreskin to the penis that will naturally resolve with time. If the foreskin is forced to retract, it may cause bleeding, swelling and pain. **Some boys can retract their foreskin as early as age 5, but some may not be able to do this until their teenage years.**

### How To Care for The Uncircumcised Penis

As soon as the foreskin can be retracted, it's important to clean beneath it on a regular basis. It should be a part of their daily hygiene routine through adulthood.

Teach your child to:

- Gently, **not** forcefully, pull back the foreskin from the tip of the penis.
- Clean the tip of the penis and the inside part of the foreskin with mild soap and water.
- Rinse beneath the foreskin thoroughly.
- Pull the foreskin back over the tip of the penis.

It is important to pull the foreskin back over the head of the penis after cleaning beneath it. If the foreskin is left behind the head of the penis too long, it may get caught and you or your child may not be able to return it to its typical position (paraphimosis). If this occurs, it's important to seek emergency medical care. Paraphimosis can cause pain and swelling, and it may lead to complications if left untreated.

This information is not specific to your child but provides general information. If you have any questions, please call the clinic at 612-813-8000, option 6 for the nurses.