

# 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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