HEY CHARLES, YOU'VE HAD AN MC. CAN I ASK YOU SOME QUESTIONS?

NO PROBLEM, MOSES. I'LL TELL YOU EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW!
Be Smart! There is a lot of talk about MC, but it is important to know the facts. This booklet can help you learn what you need to know! Read on and hear Moses and Charles discuss what MC is all about, the benefits and risks, and what happens when a man goes for MC. If you still need to know more, talk to a counselor or health provider!
Male Circumcision (MC) is the removal of the foreskin from the head of the penis.

MC is one of the oldest and most common medical procedures in the world. It has often been done in traditional settings, with groups of young men receiving circumcision at the same time. MC can be performed from just after birth to adulthood. Newborn MC is a simpler procedure. Generally, it has a quicker recovery time and has fewer complications. MC is done with local anaesthetic, a pain prevention injection, which reduces pain significantly. MC can also be done with general anaesthetic, in which the client is put to sleep.
MC can help prevent HIV, but does not provide 100% protection.

Research throughout Africa shows that MC provides some protection against HIV. However, MC does not provide 100% protection. The researchers estimate that a man who is circumcised appears to be 60% less likely to get HIV. In the research trials, thousands of men were divided into two groups — one group was circumcised and one group was not. After two years, circumcised men had less HIV, showing that MC offers some protection. Men who are circumcised are also less likely to get STI’s such as syphilis and chancre. MC also gives some protection against penile cancer and — in infants — urinary tract infections. Also, women whose partners are circumcised are less likely to get cervical cancer.

However, MC is not 100% protection and it is still possible to get HIV or other STI’s after MC. MC is a surgical procedure, and there are some risks. Risks include a reaction to the pain medications and infection. MC services provided by a trained health provider is a very safe procedure, and complications are rare. Most patients don’t have any problems. The typical problems encountered include:

- Pain
- Bleeding
- Swelling
- Reaction to the medicine
- Infection

MC keeps the penis clean and can reduce the risk of STI’s.
The removal of the foreskin makes it more difficult for HIV to enter the body.

The inside skin of the foreskin is soft and moist. Near the surface of the foreskin are special cells called “target cells” that allow HIV to infect a person. The amount of these “target cells” in the foreskin is higher than in any other surface of the body. Also, during sex the foreskin is more likely to get tiny tears or sores that allow HIV to enter the body more easily. MC removes this vulnerable area, and removes the “target cells”. After MC, the skin on the head and shaft of the penis becomes thicker and is less likely to tear.

**What About HIV?**

MC reduces the risk of HIV and other STIs, but it’s important to always practice safe sex.
It is always important to know your HIV status. Someone considering MC should definitely know whether he is positive or negative. Knowing your HIV status before MC assists in maximizing health benefits that MC provides. Clients who decline the test but still want an MC must be respected for their decision and referred to MC provider. MC is not recommended for HIV-positive men.

A clinical assessment is done before each procedure. It is necessary for the MC provider to do a clinical examination of the genital area and the penis to rule out any active or recent genital disease. If there is active disease, it must be treated before any MC can be done.

After the injection of local anaesthetic, the MC procedure can be done without any pain. An injection of anaesthetic medicine is given into the base of the penis to make it go numb, so that no pain is felt while the foreskin is cut off.

Partners should feel open about discussing MC with each other. You can mention to your partner that you have heard about MC lately and you want to know what your partner thinks. You should both be aware of the benefits, risks, and the 6-week waiting period. Couples counseling is a great way to discuss MC with someone who can help.
It is important to keep the wound area clean and dry until the 2-day review.

It is important to keep the body clean by washing without getting the dressing wet. Clients can take painkillers if they feel uncomfortable. Some clients have frequent erections for a day or two and may feel some pain. Passing urine can help relieve the pain. The client should come back two days after the procedure so the dressing can be removed. If there is any problem at all after MC, clients should contact the clinic or go to the nearest health care provider.

Clients must wait for six weeks before having sex or masturbating to give the wound a chance to heal properly.

After the dressing is off, the wound begins to heal. Clients should not have sex or masturbate for six weeks after MC because it takes time for the wound to heal completely. If the client has sex too early, the wound can be damaged and take even longer to heal. MC does not provide 100% protection. After MC one should still protect himself and his partner by using a condom. Other prevention methods include abstaining from sex and being faithful to a partner who is faithful and HIV negative.
If you are interested in MC, it is important to find a provider who has been trained in MC and offers counseling and a safe, clean environment. Contact Society for Family Health (SFH) at 3958 for more info.