

# MALE CIRCUMCISION (MC)

INFO BOOKLET FOR WOMEN



MY PARTNER  
MOSES WANTS TO  
GO FOR **MC**. DO YOU  
KNOW ANYTHING  
ABOUT IT?

SURE!  
MY PARTNER  
CHARLES DID IT -  
AND I CAN TELL YOU  
**EVERYTHING**  
I KNOW.

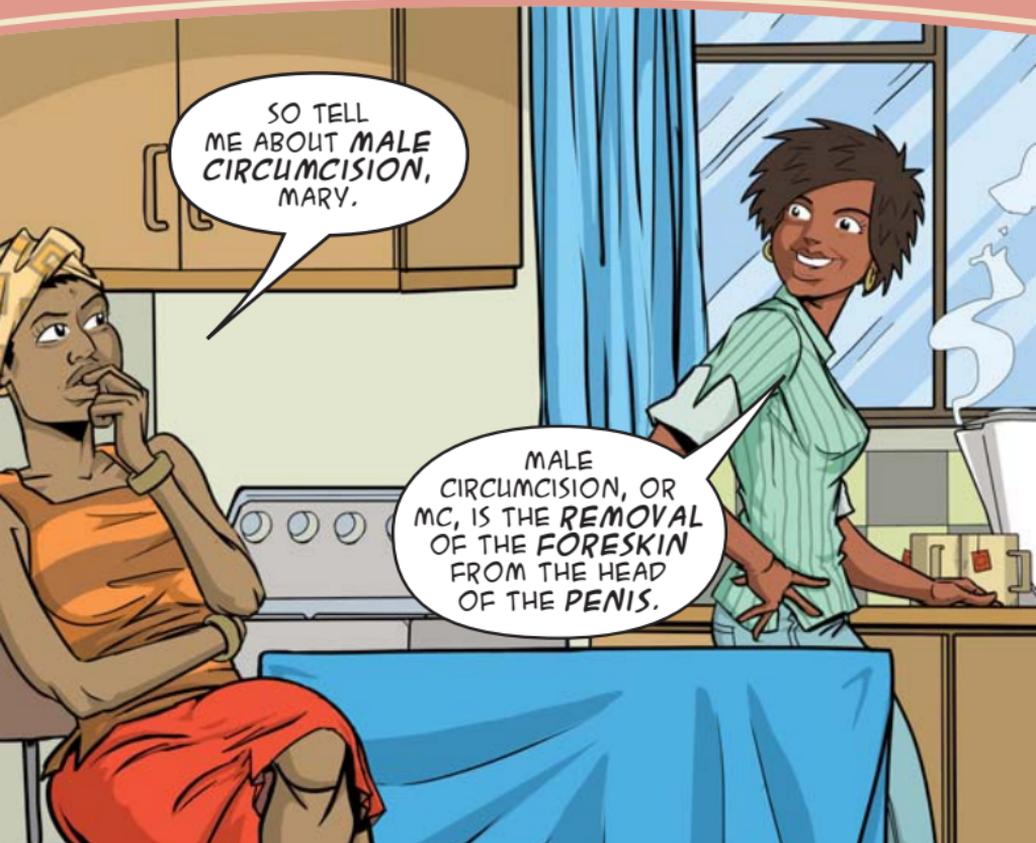
**Get informed!** There is a lot of talk about **MC**, but it is important to know the facts. This booklet can help you learn what you need to know! Read on and hear **Chibeso** and **Mary** discuss what MC is all about, the benefits and risks, and what happens when a man goes for MC. If you still need to know more, talk to a counselor or health provider!

This booklet will help you answer these questions:

- What is male circumcision (MC)?
- What are the benefits and risks of MC?
- How does MC affect women?
- How do I discuss MC with my partner?
- What about MC for newborns and young boys?



## MALE CIRCUMCISION (MC)



**MC is the removal of the foreskin from the head of the penis.**

The **foreskin** is the skin that covers all or most of the head of the penis of uncircumcised men. You can see if a man is **circumcised** by looking at his penis when he does not have an erection. When men are circumcised, you can see the head of the penis. When they are uncircumcised, the head may be partially or completely **hidden** by the foreskin. When the penis of an uncircumcised man is erect (hard), usually the foreskin pulls back and the head of the penis is uncovered. MC is a **simple surgical procedure**. MC should be performed with **local anaesthetic** (to prevent pain) by trained medical providers, together with safe **sex behaviour counselling** and an **HIV test**.

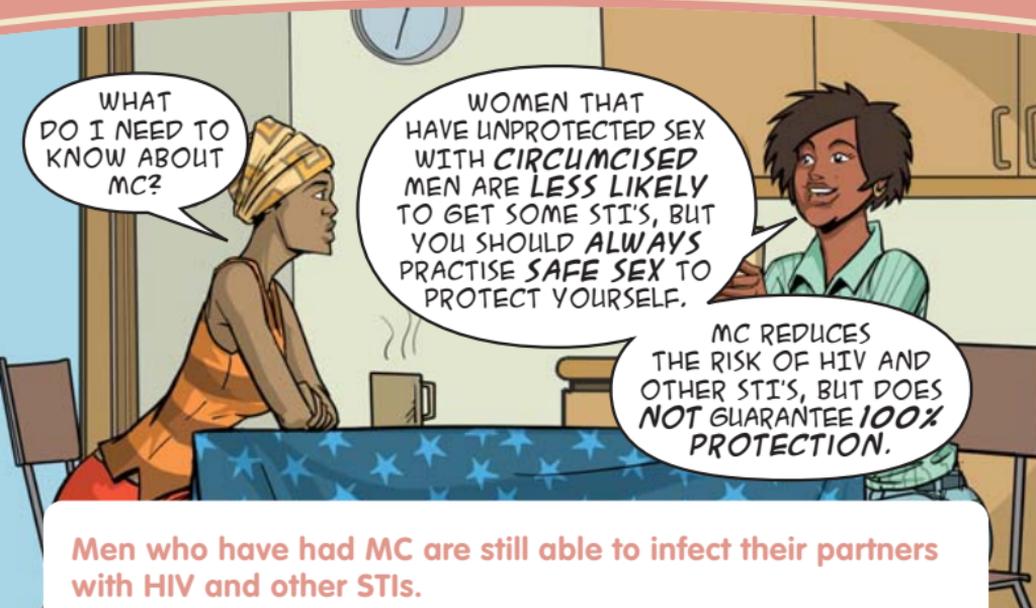
## DISCUSSION



### If your partner is interested in MC, you should feel open about discussing it with him.

You can mention that you have heard about MC lately and you want to know what he thinks. If your partner is interested in MC, you should both be aware of the **benefits** and **risks**. There are many reasons — religious, cultural or health — why some men want, or don't want, to go for MC. If a man wants to become circumcised for **health reasons**, you should encourage him to go to a trained and experienced provider who offers counselling and HIV testing. If your partner is willing to be circumcised, you should encourage him to go to see a **counselor** and you can go with him. The counselor will explain the risks and benefits of MC, and tell you about **recovery**. If your partner decides to go for MC, it is important that you and he **abstain** from sex until the wound is completely healed. You can help encourage your partner to **refrain** from sex by reassuring him you are completely willing to wait until he is healed.

# FACTS ABOUT MC



## Men who have had MC are still able to infect their partners with HIV and other STIs.

Women who have **unprotected sex** with a man who is HIV-positive are at risk of getting **HIV**, even if the man is circumcised. To protect herself, a woman should always ensure a male or female **condom** is used whether her partner is circumcised or not (unless the man was recently tested and she knows for certain that he is HIV-negative). HIV-positive men may be at **higher risk** of transmitting HIV in the **healing period** after MC. Sex during this time should be **avoided**. HIV-negative men may be more likely to get HIV if they have sex **before** healing is complete. MC does **not** affect sexual pleasure. Sexual pleasure depends on many things, and is in the mind as much as in the body.

## It is important to know the benefits and risks of MC.

MC **reduces** the risk to men of getting HIV when having unprotected sex, but it does **not** provide **100% protection**. MC reduces the risk of inflammation under the foreskin. MC also reduces the risk of genital ulcers and other **sexually transmitted infections (STIs)** such as HPV (a virus which causes cervical cancer in women). MC reduces the risk of **penile cancer** in men. Infant MC reduces the risk of **urinary tract infections** in babies. MC is a surgical procedure and has some **risks**. Risks are small when circumcision is done in **clean** conditions by **well-trained** medical staff. Most complications are minor and easily treated. The most common risks include:

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

## SEX AFTER MC



### Clients must wait for six weeks before having sex or masturbating to give the wound the 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. Men who have had MC are still able to **infect** their partners with HIV and other STIs.

## YOUNG BOYS AND BABIES



WHAT ABOUT  
**YOUNG BOYS AND  
BABIES?** SHOULD THEY  
GO FOR MC?

MC FOR BABIES IN THE  
**FIRST MONTH** IS SIMPLER  
THAN IT IS FOR BOYS AND MEN,  
AND THE **RECOVERY** IS FASTER.  
BOYS AND BABIES WHO GO FOR  
MC WILL HAVE A **LOWER RISK** OF  
**HIV** AND OTHER INFECTIONS  
WHEN THEY GROW UP.

**Parents should consider whether to have their sons circumcised.**

Babies who are circumcised are **less likely** to get urinary tract infections and when they grow up, they will have a **lower risk** of HIV and other infections. MC for babies (in the first month) is **simpler** and recovery is **faster** than MC for boys or men. It is also **safer**, has fewer **complications**, and gives a better **cosmetic** result.

For more info call  
**3958**



IF YOU OR YOUR PARTNER 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.



Ministry of Health



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