



# 10 Reasons Why YOU Should *STOP CIRCUMCISING BABY BOYS*

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## 1. ***Because the foreskin is a normal, useful body part, and you don't need to cut it off.***

There is no medical reason for you to perform "routine" neonatal circumcisions. No professional medical association in the United States or the rest of the world recommends it; the American Medical Association calls it "non-therapeutic."

## 2. ***Because boys deserve the same protection from you as girls.***

In the United States, girls of all ages are protected by Federal and state laws from genital surgery to which they cannot consent, whether practiced in medical or non-medical settings, and regardless of the religious or cultural preferences of their parents. There is no ethical rationale for you to distinguish between female and male genital alteration.

## 3. ***Because your patient is the baby, not the parent, and your patient has not consented.***

Circumcision painfully and permanently alters a baby boy's genitals, removing healthy, protective, functional tissue from the penis and exposing the child to unnecessary pain and medical risks. No baby boy can consent for himself; thus, "routine" circumcision violates a basic premise of bioethics, which says it is unethical for doctors like yourself to perform an intervention unless the child's health or life is at risk.

## 4. ***Because times and attitudes have changed.***

While circumcision rates vary across the country, overall today more than 60% of all baby boys in the United States leave the hospital intact. More and more of your colleagues are educating themselves about the benefits of the natural foreskin, and are telling parents that circumcision is risky, harmful, unethical, painful, and medically unnecessary.

## 5. ***Because removing part of a baby's penis is painful, risky, and harmful.***

Babies are sensitive to pain. Yet many circumcisions in the U.S. are performed with little or no pain control. As with any surgery, complications can and do occur with circumcision, including infection, abnormal bleeding, removal of too much skin, removal of all or part of the glans or penile shaft, life-threatening infections, urinary problems, and even death. ALL circumcisions, even the "uncomplicated" ones, result in the loss of the foreskin and its important functions, and leave a permanent penile scar.

## 6. ***Because doctors in other medically advanced countries don't circumcise baby boys.***

Physicians in Europe, Asia, and Latin America are often appalled to hear that American doctors and hospitals routinely remove part of a boy's penis shortly after birth. Approximately 75% of the men in the world are not circumcised and remain intact throughout their lives.

## 7. ***Because you have better things to do with your time.***

As you know, health care costs are skyrocketing. You have less time to spend with patients, and fewer dollars to allocate towards necessary services. Why, then, should you spend your time consuming finite resources to carry out a medically unnecessary and ethically problematic procedure?

## 8. ***Because you took an oath to heal the sick and do no harm.***

The foreskin is a healthy, normal, sensitive, and useful body part. In infant boys, the foreskin is attached to the head of the glans penis, and protects it from urine, feces, and irritation. It also protects the sterile urinary tract from contaminants. Throughout life, the foreskin keeps the glans moist and shields it from injury; its erogenous nerve endings and lubricating function aid sexual pleasure. By crushing and then severing the foreskin during a "routine" circumcision, you damage the healthy penis, create unnecessary risks to the boy's health, and diminish the adult male's ability to experience full sexual pleasure for his lifetime.

## 9. ***Because circumcision doesn't prevent HIV or other diseases.***

Despite common misinformation, studies show NO conclusive link between circumcision and STD prevention. Claims that circumcision prevents disease have repeatedly proven to be exaggerated or false; a report in *The Lancet* last year showed that it actually *increases* HIV transmission rates for women in Africa, and a recent CDC study shows that circumcision does *not* protect gay men from HIV. Most men in the United States are circumcised, yet our STD rates are as high as or higher than those in countries where circumcision is rare. Clearly, circumcision does not protect against STDs; only abstinence or safe sex practices, including the use of condoms, can do that.

## 10. ***Because children should be protected from permanent bodily alteration inflicted on them without their consent in the name of culture, religion, profit, or parental preference.***

Every child – male and female – has an inherent right to a complete body. No individual – physician, parent, or anyone else – has the right to take away another individual's choice for bodily self-determination.