WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER CIRCUMCISION

Dr. Mark Barraza
Pediatric Urology

NORMAL COURSE AFTER GENERAL ANESTHESIA
(Going to Sleep for Surgery)

A breathing tube was placed in your child’s throat to help him breathe while he was asleep during surgery. This often causes a sore throat, which can be quite painful. This typically goes away in the first day. If this bothers your child, we suggest cold drinks and soft foods. Some may need to avoid hard and crunchy foods for 1–2 days.

After surgery, it is normal for your child to have a low-grade fever, usually 99 or 100 degrees Fahrenheit. We become concerned if the fever is greater than 101.5 degrees. Usually, fever after surgery is due to respiratory infections, such as ear infections, colds, and possibly, pneumonia. It is often preferable to have your child’s doctor check him if he has a high fever soon after surgery to be sure that it is not an ear, sinus, or lung infection. You or your child’s doctor should contact our office if there is any concern about infection at the site of surgery.

APPEARANCE AND CARE OF THE INCISIONS

The penis normally becomes swollen after surgery. The swelling is usually greatest between the line of the circumcision and the ridge of the head of the penis. This skin has a different color and is usually pink. The swelling gets worse for the first few days after surgery and then slowly resolves. Most of the swelling will be gone within a month but it takes up to 6 months for all of the swelling to go away.

The head of the penis is often raw when the foreskin is pulled back for the circumcision. A yellow-whitish film may develop on the head of the penis in the first few days after surgery. This typically goes away within one week. This is not pus or a sign of infection. Your son will have a clear, plastic dressing around his penis. This may fall off by itself. If the plastic dressing does not come off in two days you MUST remove it. You may get it wet to help remove it. Once the dressing is off, apply antibiotic ointment to the head of the penis several times a day until this film disappears. This should be done with each diaper change if your son is still in diapers. Urine (pee-pee) will not hurt the circumcision and should not cause pain since surgery was not performed on the area where the urine comes out. Urine is sterile and does not cause infections. It is not unusual to see a small amount of bleeding from the incision...
for the first day or two. Please call us if you see large blood clots in the diaper or underwear. Bruising on the penis and even around the base of the penis or in the scrotum is common and usually disappears in one to two weeks. The stitches that were placed will dissolve over a period of 2–6 weeks. You may bathe your son beginning three days after surgery. Until this time just give him a sponge bath and do not soak his penis underwater. If he has a messy bowel movement, clean the penis gently with warm water, wiping bottom to tip.

Itching is a normal occurrence after surgery and is a normal part of the healing process. This does not mean that your child is in pain.

PAIN CONTROL

Children usually get through surgery very well and have little pain. We suggest giving ibuprofen every eight hours for the first three days after surgery; this may prevent pain before it begins and reduce the need for stronger medications. This occasionally can upset the stomach, so it is a good idea that your child eat or drink something at the same time as taking the medication. After 3 days, your child can take this medication as needed.

Ibuprofen occasionally may not be strong enough to deal with all of the pain after surgery. Your doctor has written a prescription for a stronger medicine (a narcotic) to manage severe pain. Narcotics will not cause addiction in that short period after surgery. We suggest that you fill this prescription before going home. Sometimes, the patient may feel fine but then wake up in the middle of the night needing the stronger pain medicine. Constipation and nausea are common side effects of the stronger pain medicine. Therefore, the stronger pain medicine should only be used if he is having severe pain not helped by ibuprofen.

This sheet is meant to be a general guide to help you care for your son following surgery. If you have problems, please contact our office at (601) 815–1454. There is an answering service at night and on the weekends to locate a nurse or doctor.