Circumcision

Circumcision is a surgical procedure performed to remove the foreskin from the end of the penis. This skin covers the glans of the penis and can be removed in this relatively simple surgical procedure. In this country this procedure has been relatively routine, but is becoming less so with time.

Circumcision is not medically necessary. According to the American Academy of pediatrics and the American Medical Association, there is not enough medical evidence to support routine circumcision.

There are studies which show some modest medical benefits of circumcision, but these are small benefits and not thought to be significant enough to ward a surgical procedure on their own. These benefits include a very small reduction in risk for bladder infections during the first year of life only, a reduction in the risk of penile cancer which is very rare, a slightly reduced risk of transmitting sexual transmitted diseases, and a greater ease of genital hygiene.

The risks of circumcision include bleeding and infection as with any invasive procedure. If the foreskin is cut to long or two short this can be a relatively minor complication. There is some evidence that irritation can occur when the foreskin has been removed and the tip of the penis becomes exposed to irritations that it would be typically protected from.

The decision to circumcise your child should be made according to your own values. You should take into account the potential risks and benefits, however since these are both relatively small, most people think it is reasonable to make the choice on any grounds you choose.

It should be noted that Medicaid is no longer paying for circumcision.