

<http://www.mothering.com/discussions/showthread.php?t=567785&highlight=school+age+child+retract>

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I worked up an inservice on care of the intact penis last year. I ended up with 17 main references, two of which were NOCIRC and CIRP, and all the others were either journals articles, letters to the editor of medical journals, patient handouts (AAP and McKesson), and the like, all from English speaking countries with one not so good one from India. In addition, there were a few European info sheets on self-care, but they did not have info on babies.

Of all these:

*All caution against "forcible retraction", in some cases specifying not to try to retract the foreskin until separation occurs

1) AAP (Medem): "Until separation occurs, do not try to pull the foreskin back, especially an infant's,"

2) Australian Family Physician 1998: "No attempt should be made to retract a foreskin in a child unless significant separation of the subpreputial adhesions has occurred."

*3 recommend early "gentle, partial retraction", starting at the specified age of "after age 1." (These are the ONLY ones out of the 17 references that mention a specific age for parents to start retracting the child.):

1) www.drgreene.org (Online Q&A): "After his first birthday, you might want to very gently pull back on the skin of the shaft to see if the foreskin retracts. As long as the foreskin doesn't easily retract (even in a 10-year-old) only the outside needs to be washed. If the foreskin retracts a little, it would be okay to gently clean the exposed part of the glans with water."

2) B.D. Schmitt MD (McKesson handout): "Gentle, partial retraction can begin when your son is 1 or 2 years old." But elsewhere states: "In general, foreskin retraction is overdone in our society... there should be no rush to achieve full retraction."

3) Indian Pediatrics 2004: "From the 2nd birthday, the mother should be encouraged to gently retract the foreskin while bathing the child... this will make the foreskin open up, revealing the end of the glans..."

* 2 others mention "gentle retraction when in the bath" with no specified age, but with the stated or implied direction that the parents are to be doing the withdrawing, prior to the time the child is physically capable of doing it himself:

1) Fox 1985: "The parents, when bathing the child, should gently retract the foreskin."

2) Boyce 1983: "During the bath, the foreskin should be gently withdrawn."

* 5 specifically state (or mention the opinion of others) to let the child be the first to retract himself:

1) CMAJ 1967: "Since the young child is able to bathe himself by the age of 4 or 5, retraction of the foreskin can be put off until the child is old enough to take care of

himself."

2) CIRP

3) NOCIRC

4) Contemporary Pediatrics 2002: "Some physicians believe that the foreskin should be left alone until the child is old enough to retract it on his own. We recommend teaching the school-age child to retract and clean beneath the foreskin at least once a week whether complete retraction is possible or not. Others advocate waiting until puberty, when complete retraction is readily achieved."

5) Wright 1994 (Australia): "The time to pull the foreskin back is when the child is old enough to do this himself. The normal prepuce should be left alone, with no attempt to retract it until the boy is able to do so himself, at the earliest at three years of age."

* 3 mention specifically to "leave it alone":

1) Watson 1987: "The best hygiene is to keep hands off and leave the prepuce alone."

2) CIRP: "Leave it alone."

3) RACP (Australia) 2004: "Requires no special care in infancy. It should be left alone."

You might be interested to read a quote from a 1956 article in the American Journal of Nursing Vol. 56, No. 1, pp. 75-6 on "Care of the Foreskin". [Actually, the article only spends one paragraph on care of the foreskin, and the entire rest of the article about circumcision!]

"In the uncircumcised child, the care of the foreskin need not be a complicated procedure. At the Jackson Memorial Hospital [FL], we follow this routine for the newborn infant. Each day, the nurse retracts the foreskin gently and cautiously as far as it will go without pain to the baby. The smegma is removed with a cotton ball, moistened in water, and the foreskin is then returned to its original position... The procedure is repeated each day while the baby is in the nursery. Before the baby is discharged from the hospital, the mother is instructed to try to retract the foreskin a little more each day, if possible, without pain to the baby. The exposed portion of the glans should be washed thoroughly with warm tap water and any accumulated secretion removed. The application of some bland ointment, such as A and D or Vaseline, to the glans will prevent further adhesions."

YIKES!

Gillian