

## “I’m not missing anything by being circumcised; why should I restore?”

With no accurate means of comparison, the typical circumcised man does not know what he is missing. A man, colorblind from birth and thinking his sight is normal, might also never question his condition. However, as a man ages, he loses sensitivity of the penis. Many men have difficulty achieving sufficient stimulation to reach orgasm. The foreskin is a definite asset in maintaining this sensitivity.

Foreskin restoration is a logical process of returning the penis to as close to its original condition as possible. However, it can be frustrating, time-consuming and care must be taken not to use undue force.

While the majority of circumcised men are unconscious of, or deny any negative feelings about circumcision, a significant number in the U.S. and around the world are aware of their feeling of loss, resentment and betrayal by parents and anger over this violation of their bodies.

When one understands the anatomy of a normal penis, the structure and function of the foreskin, the historical and cultural context of circumcision and the truth behind the myths, one can better understand men's feelings and motivations for restoration. Our message to men is that it is acceptable to care for our bodies in this way.

## The foreskin is a normal, healthy, and beneficial part of the penis

The foreskin consists of at least three structures: an outer foreskin, inner foreskin and the frenulum. It begins as far back as the shaft midpoint, covers the glans (head of the penis), and can extend beyond the glans. The frenulum (similar to that which is under the tongue) connects the foreskin to the underside. The foreskin and glans are joined by a common membrane and separate gradually. For some, the process is not complete until puberty.

## The purpose and function of the foreskin

**Protection.** The foreskin protects the sensitive glans throughout life from adverse conditions, such as the abrasiveness of clothing. Without the foreskin, the glans becomes dry and calloused and desensitized.

**Pleasure.** The foreskin is a unique structure filled with delicate nerves and a rich blood supply. The foreskin enhances sexual pleasure, especially as it glides over the corona (ridge of the glans) during sexual activity.

**Sensitivity.** The foreskin is a highly nerve-laden structure, containing approximately 10,000 nerve endings. It is this structure that gives the man his most pleasurable sensations. It also helps to retain glans sensitivity. Circumcision removed this structure and over time sensitivity decreases, making it more difficult to achieve satisfactory stimulation.

**Lubrication.** Much as the way your eyelid lubricates and protects your eye, the foreskin keeps the glans moist and sensitive. This effect is helpful during sexual penetration as the penile shaft glides within its own skin sheath rather than directly, chafing one's partner. Without the foreskin, many couples need additional lubricants.

**Privacy.** Like the female clitoris, the glans is designed to be a protected internal organ, exposed only when aroused.

## Why men restore their foreskins

**Pleasure.** The new foreskin adds pleasure to the penis during sexual activity. For most men seeking restoration, this alone is reason enough to restore.

**Protection.** The foreskin protects the glans from the abrasiveness of clothing. When protected, the glans will regain much of its original sensitivity.

**Privacy.** Like the female clitoris, the glans penis is intended to be an internal organ, visible only when aroused.

**Aesthetics.** 85% of the world's men feel an intact penis is normal, natural and attractive.

**Wholeness.** When seeing their circumcision scar, many men sense that part of their body is missing, which is very similar to women who have had a breast removed. Seeking physical and emotional wholeness is quite natural.

**Emotional pain.** When feeling hopeless over their unchosen circumcised state, men can be helped to manage anger by doing something about a condition

which they had always believed was irreversible.

**Resentment.** A 1991 survey of 301 males seeking restoration information showed that almost 70% of those circumcised as infants or children resent their parents for their circumcision. Regaining power over their bodies reduces resentment.

**Empowerment.** Victims of rape, crime and child or spousal abuse typically report a deep sense of helplessness and vulnerability. Who is more helpless and vulnerable than a restrained newborn having part of his penis amputated? Men restore to take back control of their bodies from the damage done by parents, their physicians and our culture.

Restoration isn't sought only by those circumcised at birth. Some children are unwillingly circumcised. Others are pressured "for their own good" by friends, sex partners, or military. Some immigrants circumcise themselves or their sons "to be American." Afterwards, most males note a marked decrease of sensitivity, which lead some to restore.

## How is restoration done?

Once circumcised, one can only approximate the look and feel of an original foreskin through restoration. For most men, however, this approximation is preferable to their circumcised state. Non-surgical stretching of the shaft skin is the most commonly used method. Many have achieved excellent results, with total coverage of the glans and the appearance of never having been circumcised. The skin and underlying muscle, nerves, and connective tissue have an amazing ability to grow if gentle tension is maintained over time.

For specific details on the methods listed below, we recommend Jim Bigelow's book, "The Joy of Uncircumcising!", or visit NORM's website to find your nearest support group, or to read more about restoration methods.

**Taping.** Using whichever type of first aid tape that works best on your skin, one pulls whatever shaft skin you have over the glans and tapes it closed. Gentle pressure from the glans will start stretching the skin.

**Manually.** Other men use gentle manual stretching of the shaft skin on a daily basis.

**Extension Devices.** When sufficient skin length has been obtained, various extension devices (weights, elastic straps, cones, etc.) can be used to augment the stretching.  
**Surgery.** Surgical reconstruction is not recommended. Surgery may seem to be faster, but it is riskier, with results that are usually less than satisfactory. It is costly and does not have good results in most cases. No safe, effective, surgical techniques have been developed.

Many men who achieve their desired amount of foreskin through manual tugging, taping, using a restoration device or other methods may then seek minor touch-up surgery to contour the tip of the foreskin for a more natural snug fit and/or to attempt reconstruction of the frenulum. NORM maintains a list of medical referrals for those who are interested in touch-up surgery after the foreskin restoration process has been completed. Remember though that as with any surgery there is the risk of something going wrong.

### **How long does it take?**

The time it takes to recover the glans varies. The factors that influence the nonsurgical stretching methods include: how much shaft skin remains after circumcision, how diligent and persistent one is with stretching, and the amount of foreskin coverage desired. For these reasons, some men achieve restoration' after months, while for others, it can take several years.

Since the process of restoration can be lengthy and involved, many men find it helpful to join a support group for the technical and moral support offered by such a group. Visit NORM's website to find a group near you.

### **What is circumcision?**

Circumcision is the removal of some or all of a newborn's foreskin and frenulum. It is the only commonly performed surgery in the western world done without a patient's consent to prevent future medical problems. It is unethical for the reason that it violates the medical dictum of "do no harm" among other reasons. Parents often consent with incomplete knowledge of anatomy, surgical risks, and future complications. Tragically, many infants (who we know feel pain acutely) receive no anesthesia or postoperative pain relief. There are several

methods used to circumcise baby boy, most are generally as follows. First the baby's arms and legs are restrained. A metal probe is inserted between the glans and the foreskin and the two structures are torn apart. The foreskin is crushed and a cut is made in it. It is then pulled forward and amputated. The raw glans is then totally exposed, which, along with the remaining inner foreskin, which eventually becomes a dried membrane and leaves the shaft skin taut and immobile when erect.

This "little snip" removes from 50 to 80% of the sheath's structure. A permanent, visible scar remains. This violation of bodily and human rights robs the male of his birthright: an intact, fully functional penis.

### **History of circumcision in America**

Routine circumcision in the U.S. was not widely practiced until the late 1800's, introduced from England to cure masturbation (then thought to cause insanity and other medical/psychological ills). England rejected routine circumcision in 1949. When the masturbation theory was disproved, the medical profession used hygiene, cancer, infection and now AIDS, to justify the procedure. There is, in fact, no valid medical evidence to justify routine infant circumcision.

Medical professionals are slow to abolish a surgery producing millions of dollars annually. Men's Voices show that the medical community violates its prime dictum: "Do no harm."

#### **For more information on restoration visit:**

[www.norm.org](http://www.norm.org)  
[www.norm-uk.org](http://www.norm-uk.org)

#### **Recommended reading:**

**"The Joy of Uncircumcising!" by Jim Bigelow, Ph.D.**

#### **For more information on circumcision visit:**

[www.cirp.org](http://www.cirp.org)  
[www.nocirc.org](http://www.nocirc.org)  
[www.circumcision.org](http://www.circumcision.org)

# Why Should I Restore?

***The National Organization of Restoring Men***  
*is a non-profit support group for men who have concerns about being circumcised, are considering foreskin restoration, or are in the process of restoring their foreskins. Our aim is to help men regain a sense of self-directedness -- physically as well as emotionally.*



[www.norm.org](http://www.norm.org)