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Guidelines for caring for your newborn's circumcision

Mazel Tov on the birth of your new son and his entry into the covenant of Abraham. The *brit milah* ceremony is an exciting as well as a stressful time for most families. Here are a few guidelines to help you care for the circumcision in the first few days after the *brit milah* ceremony.

1. The local anesthetic will last about one hour. You may give your baby the normal dose of liquid infant Tylenol every six hours for the first twenty-four hours if he is irritable.
2. There is a gauze-square with Vaseline on the baby's penis. The first time you change him, leave the gauze. The second time you change his diaper, throw away the gauze.
3. It is not necessary to use gauze again, but every time you change him for the next five to six days, examine the shaft of the penis and place some Vaseline (about one teaspoon) around the entire circumference of the cut. Continue this until the area looks healed. The purpose for the Vaseline is to prevent the gauze or diaper from sticking on the penis.
4. After 2-3 days, if upon examination, the foreskin appears to be overgrowing the glans (head of the penis), gently push the foreskin downward to expose the entire glans. This will prevent adhesions from reforming between the glans and the skin of the shaft.
5. If you wish to wash the area, use a cotton ball and warm water to gently clean the skin. Do not use alcohol and do not rub the tissue with any force as this may cause bleeding.

What to watch for:

1. There may be a small amount of blood on the gauze; this is normal. If there is a flow of blood, pressure for five minutes (watch the clock) will usually stop it. If the bleeding persists, call your pediatrician or me.
2. There may be some redness and swelling at the area around the cut end of the foreskin. This is a natural part of the healing process. The amount of swelling will vary with each child. The swelling usually reaches a maximum in about two days and then takes a few days to recede. Some babies have almost no swelling, while others have more. If the swelling extends down the shaft and onto the abdomen, you should call. Infection is extremely rare after circumcision.
3. Since part of the circumcision is on a mucous membrane, a yellowish-gray area may form at the site of the cut. This may be similar to what you see at the site of the umbilical cord insertion. This is NOT pus and does not represent infection, but it is normal for the healing process.

The circumcision should be healed entirely within seven or eight days. If you have questions, you may call me at (561) 784-1933.

May you share many *simchat* together in the years to come!

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