

## What changes can you expect afterwards?

### Genitals

Before reversal you likely had one very small hole. Being opened up reveals the two holes that were there when you were born – one for urinating and one for sex, periods and having a baby. These are small but they stretch wider during sex and when giving birth, then they go back to being small. You were also born with a clitoris. The external part of your clitoris may not be there now, but this does not mean you cannot enjoy sex. The clitoral tissue extends deep inside you. Your midwife will talk to you more about this.

### Urinating

Your urine will come out faster, so it may feel different and sound louder.

### Periods

Your periods should be less painful. You may have more blood coming out and more quickly. This is a change in how the blood flows not in the amount your body is making.

### Discharge

Some days you might have a white or yellowish discharge. Many women's bodies naturally do this. If you wish, you can wear a thin panty liner to absorb it. If the discharge has a strong smell or you experience itching, you should see your GP as this may be a sign of infection.

### Sex

Intercourse may feel different. It should be more comfortable and may be more enjoyable.

If you find that you are having difficulty adjusting to these changes, please tell your midwife or you can talk to our counsellor about your concerns.

If you would like further information about the de-infibulation (reversal) procedure, or anything relating to FGM, please ask any member of our team.

Please be assured that all of our consultations are completely confidential and that we are here to support you.

The teams at the NFGMSCs are here to support you and protect children who are at risk of FGM.

### Any concerns

**You may experience severe bleeding after your procedure – if you do go to your local A&E immediately.**

If you think you may have an infection, see your GP. If you have any other concerns or questions, please call:

### NFGMSC

The clinic is for non-pregnant women 18 years and over

### Opening times

### Address

### Contact details

Health Advocate

For more information on the full list of clinics, please visit: [www.nhs.uk/fgm](http://www.nhs.uk/fgm)

## Aftercare Information Leaflet



## National Female Genital Mutilation Support Clinics (NFGMSC)

Providing information and support for women (18 years +) who have undergone FGM and who are not pregnant at the point of seeking help.

- Assessments.
- Treatment.
- Counselling.
- Access to an advocate.



#FGMQUESTIONS  
#NFGMSC  
#ENDFGM

This leaflet gives you information about the FGM reversal procedure, also known as 'deinfibulation'. If you have any questions please speak to one of our team who will be happy to support you.

## What is reversal?

'Reversal', also known as de-infibulation, is a minor 'opening' procedure for women who have had their vaginas closed, leaving only a small hole in their vaginal area, as part of female genital mutilation (FGM). FGM is also known as female circumcision or cutting.

The opening procedure helps a woman's body to function more safely and comfortably.

Having a reversal will;

- Help to pass urine and menstrual blood more easily and comfortably.
- Make sex more comfortable and enjoyable.
- Help have a safe vaginal delivery.
- Enable you to have intimate internal examinations, e.g. have cervical smear tests.

## Before reversal

You will meet with the midwife or doctor who will explain the procedure and answer any questions you have. We advise writing down any questions you have beforehand so you can ask them during the appointment.

Once you have understood the benefits and risks you will be asked to sign a consent form.

Although the procedure is very safe all operations and anaesthetics carry small risks of infection and bleeding.

Before you come, think about what will help you feel calm and relaxed during the procedure. This may be having someone in the room for support such as a friend or a health advocate. You may want to choose some music to listen to, or do deep calm breathing exercises.

If you are concerned that you may be upset or have bad memories or flashbacks during the procedure, please talk to the midwife or doctor about this, **before** the day of the procedure. You may also find it helpful to talk to our counsellor.

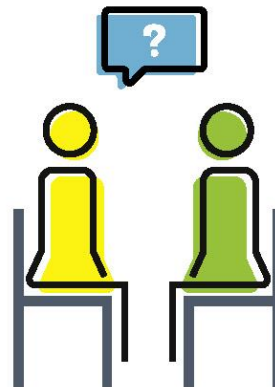
You may want to talk to your husband/partner about having the procedure. Support is available on how to talk to your partner from the team at the clinic.

## The Procedure

Please wear loose clothing on the day of the procedure.

You may feel some sensation during the procedure but local anaesthesia is used on the area so you do not feel any pain. You will feel a small prick or scratch when this is given.

The midwife or doctor will open the scar tissue so that both the opening from where you pass urine and the vaginal opening are no longer covered.



Afterwards the edges will be over-sewn so that the skin cannot re-join back together and to reduce the risk of infection and bleeding. **The procedure typically takes about 30 minutes.** You will be encouraged to rest a short time in the clinic room before you go home. Driving home is not advised. The team at the clinic can help you call a taxi or find a public transport route for you.

## After reversal

### Cleaning your genitals

- Wash with water 6-8 times in the first 24 hours.
- Only use water – no creams or ointments.
- While washing, run your finger in between the opening to keep the edges apart.

### Pain relief

- The midwife will give you pain relief medication. If needed, you can take two paracetamol every four hours over 24 hours.
- Use running water when passing urine as it may sting. You can also have a shower or sit in the bath.

### Sexual intercourse

- We advise you not having penetrative sex for about 4 weeks or until the area has healed.
- Use water-based lubricant for the first time you have sex after the procedure and keep using it if it helps you enjoy sex more.

### Get it checked

- You will be made an appointment two weeks' after the procedure so that we can check everything is healing well.
- If you feel feverish or are in a lot of pain this may be a sign of infection. You should see your GP straight away who may give you antibiotic tablets.