

UCLH

Children's FGM (female genital mutilation) Service

Attending the FGM Children and Young People's Clinic

Information for patients and their carers

Introduction

We understand that parents and children may be worried about what will happen during an examination and may find it embarrassing. This leaflet is to help you understand how we examine a child's genitalia (private parts) so that you and your child know what to expect.

Why do we carry out an examination?

- You may be unsure if your child has undergone FGM and would like to know.
- Social services or the police may have requested an examination because of concerns raised by someone else. We will write a report to them explaining what we have found.
- If your child has had FGM then it is important to check if there are any lasting health problems which may need treatment.
 - If there is some treatment which would be of benefit we will discuss all the options with you and your daughter.



Who will carry out the examination?

The medical examination will be carried out by the paediatrician (children's doctor) and gynaecologist (a doctor that specialises in the female reproductive system).

Where will the examination happen?

Your appointment will be in the children's outpatient department at University College London hospital in the 'EGA' building level -1. There are no signs stating the clinic is to do with FGM. There are two waiting rooms - one for children over 12 and one for children under 12.

Who else will be there?

Just like any other appointment that you may have been to, there may be other doctors, children's nurses and a play specialist who will help prepare your child for the examination. We also work closely with a child and adolescent psychotherapist (a doctor who specialises in thoughts and emotions) who is there to support children and families. You and your child can choose who will be with them when they are examined.

What will happen at the appointment?

Coming to see us is a good opportunity for us to talk to you and your child about your child's health. The doctor will ask about your daughter's health and development, your home and family, and why you have come. There will also be an opportunity for you to speak to the doctor separately.

What happens during the examination?

The doctor will then examine her and this will be a top to toe examination of her body, including chest, abdomen, mouth, ears and throat. She may or may not know we are also checking her genitals to check if she has been cut. We will never do an examination against your child's will and we will stop if your child becomes upset.

The doctors will examine only the outside of the genitals. Your daughter will be asked to remove the clothes from the lower part of her body (pants, leggings, trousers). If she is wearing a skirt then this can be pulled up. She will be asked to sit on a special examination couch in a "frog leg" position so the doctors can see the genital area. A special camera called a colposcope is used to look at the genital area. This shines bright light on the skin and can also magnify any scars or other findings. The examination findings can be saved as a picture or recorded on a DVD. The doctors will ask you for your consent to save these pictures as they may be needed as part of the medical report.

Who is there for you and your child to talk to about your feelings and concerns?

We try to make the experience of your child coming to see us as nice as possible. We have a play specialist and children's nurses to explain what will happen to your child to help with any worries that they may have. You will have the time to discuss the examination with the child and adolescent psychotherapist (a doctor who specialises in thoughts and emotions). We understand coming to hospital and meeting social services can be stressful and the psychotherapist is here to listen to any concerns and worries you or your child may have.

What happens afterwards?

We will send you a copy of the letter written to social services and your GP. If your daughter is found to have FGM, then we have to send information about this to the Department of Health. If the police are not already aware then we also have a legal duty to inform them of what we have found.

Core team:

Professor Sarah Creighton, Consultant Gynaecologist

Dr. Deborah Hodes, Consultant Paediatrician

Louise Williams, Nurse Specialist

Claudia de Campos, Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist (WDH)

Mags Potter, Play Specialist

Contact details

General enquiries: Telephone: 020 3447 5241

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Where can I get more information?

NHS Choices search 'FGM services'

'FORWARD' FORWARD (Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development)

<http://forwarduk.org.uk/>

UCLH cannot accept responsibility for information provided by external organisations.



