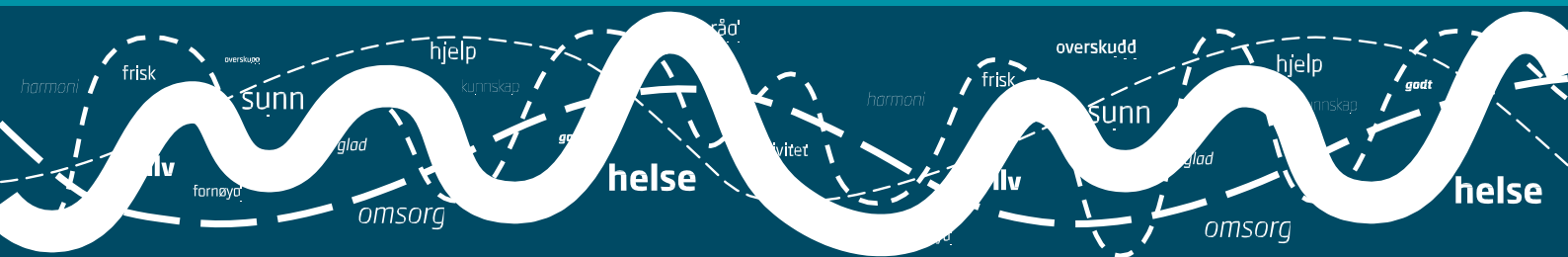


Health effects and medical assistance following genital mutilation



Genital mutilation

Female genital mutilation is a traditional practice linked to local customs and values.

Genital mutilation has been documented amongst young girls and women from many African countries, the Middle East and certain parts of Asia. Various forms of genital mutilation are practised.

The most common one involves removing some of the outer labia. In some cases, the inner or outer labia are sewn together, leaving a small hole for the passage of urine and menstrual blood. Genital mutilation can lead to many medical complications.

Other injuries to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons, such as pricking, piercing, cutting, scraping or burning the area are also considered to constitute genital mutilation.

In Norway, all forms of genital mutilation are illegal.

MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

If you have undergone genital mutilation and are experiencing pain, bleeding or other problems, there are a number of medical services that you can contact to talk about it and get the right treatment:

- Your GP
- The midwife at your local medical centre if you are pregnant
- A nurse at your local medical centre or the school nurse
- Women's or children's hospital clinics.

Your nurse, midwife or GP will be able to refer you to a specialist if necessary. You can also contact the women's clinic at your local hospital directly.

The medical assistance is free and everything will be treated in the strictest confidence.

MEDICAL PROBLEMS

Possible long-term problems and complications include:

- recurrent genital or urinary infections, including kidney failure
- abdominal pain/discomfort
- sexual complications
- difficult or protracted urination
- menstrual problems
- complications during childbirth with increased risks for mother and child
- psychological reactions.

Surgery and other treatment following genital mutilation

For women who have undergone a form of genital mutilation where the labia are sewn together, a surgical operation to open up the vagina can reduce or eliminate many problems. It is also a good idea to have this operation before you become sexually active, get married or give birth.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you need treatment, you can contact your local hospital.

Most major hospitals offer treatment:

TROMSØ: University Hospital of North Norway

Contact the women's clinic, tel. 77 62 64 50

BERGEN: Haukeland University Hospital

Contact the women's clinic 10am - 11.30am and 1.30pm - 2.30pm on tel. 55 97 42 36

TRONDHEIM: St. Olavs Hospital

Contact the women's clinic on tel. 72 57 47 19

STAVANGER: Stavanger University Hospital

Contact the women's clinic on tel. 51 51 93 85

OSLO: Oslo University Hospital Ullevål

Contact the women's clinic 8.30am - 12 noon on tel. 22 11 98 44

OSLO and AKERSHUS: Akershus University Hospital

Contact the women's clinic on tel. 67 96 05 00

DRAMMEN: Drammen Hospital

Contact the women's clinic on tel. 32 80 32 56

KRISTIANSAND: Sørlandet Hospital

Contact the women's clinic 9am - 3pm Mondays and Wednesdays on tel. 38 07 40 62 or 38 03 32



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