

OFFER OF MEETING ABOUT FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION AND VOLUNTARY GYNAECOLOGICAL EXAMINATION

To prevent female genital mutilation and provide health care for health problems following female genital mutilation, the government has found it appropriate for health centres and school health services around the country to offer a meeting with parents and girls about female genital mutilation, and offer a gynaecological examination to girls with a background from countries where female genital mutilation is practiced (incidence >30). The offer of a meeting is being made to the parents of girls starting school, girls in year 5, and girls in lower secondary school.

Many women who have had female genital mutilation performed on them develop long-term vaginal problems. They may include slow and painful urination, bladder infections, strong menstrual pain and problems associated with childbirth.

All forms of female genital mutilation are criminal offences, pursuant to section 1 of the Act Prohibiting Female Genital Mutilation. Female genital mutilation is an operation on girl's genitalia that harms their health. The operation can lead to pain, bleeding, impeded urination due to swelling, and damage to the urethra, bladder, vagina and rectum.

Meeting about female genital mutilation

The parents of girls who begin school or are in year 5 will be invited to a meeting with the nurse about female genital mutilation. The nurse will make sure an interpreter is present when necessary. The interpreter has a duty of confidentiality, and does not need to be in the same room.

Girls in lower secondary school will also be invited to a meeting with the nurse. Girls who want to, can also attend the meeting with the nurse about female genital mutilation together with their parents.

Consent to a voluntary gynaecological examination

If parents of girls under the age of 12 wish, they can agree to a gynaecological examination of the girl. Girls over the age of 16 can consent on their own. Girls between the ages of 12 and 16 can consent themselves, when health care workers determine that the girl has consent competency. Informed consent must be given before a gynaecological examination can be performed. The consent procured will be documented in the records.

Gynaecological examinations are performed by a doctor at the health centre. Another person will be present during the doctor's examination. Younger girls should bring a guardian. Older girls may bring another person. The doctor will determine if the girl needs follow-up from the specialist health service. A medical certificate can be written after the examination, if desired, stating that female genital mutilation has not been performed on the girl.