

BRIT MILA INFORMATION PAMPHLET

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Mazel Tov and Congratulations on the birth of your child. This is probably one of the most joyous occasions for any family. The Bris ceremony is the entry of the child into the Covenant with Abraham and is designed to introduce the new child to the family, the community, and Judaism. The most well known ceremony is the Brit Mila ceremony or the circumcision, which usually occurs on the 8th day of life for a baby boy. At this ceremony, the baby is also given a Hebrew name. If a baby girl is born, a similar ceremony is performed in which she is given a Hebrew name, but no surgical procedure is performed.

The Bris ceremony has been performed since ancient times. Many explanations have been used to explain the reason for the ceremony, but today, it is mainly for religious reasons.

In accord with the Torah, the baby should be circumcised on the eighth day after birth. The ceremony must also be performed during the day. Exceptions to these rules exist. However, for health related reasons, the ceremony can be delayed at ANY time, even up to the time of the ceremony.

The ceremony requires little preparation, but there are some requirements.

The following items are needed for the ceremony:

- 1) Kiddush Cup
- 2) Kosher Grape wine and Grape Juice
- 3) 2 Chairs
- 4) Pillows with pillowcase (nothing fancy)
- 5) Small sturdy table
- 6) Several diapers
- 7) Yamukkahs (*Kippot*)

The following honors are given at the ceremony:

- 1) Kvater/Kvaterin: person(s) who bring the baby into the room.
- 2) Sandek: Person (frequently a grandfather) who holds the baby during the ceremony.
- 3) Father and Mother each receive honors
- 4) Additional honors may be included if the parents' desire.

Preparation of the baby involves:

- 1) Please sponge bathe the baby on the morning of the ceremony.
- 2) Dress the baby in a simple outfit. A stretchy gown or “Onesie” with snaps is fine. Avoid buttons.
- 3) Do not feed the baby for 1 hour prior to the ceremony. He may be fed immediately after the ceremony.

The baby’s name, which is given during the ceremony, is frequently meaningful to the parents. The Hebrew name is the name that the child will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah and later in life at his wedding. In Ashkenazi tradition, the baby is named after a deceased relative. In Sphardic tradition, the baby is named after a living relative. The English name does not have to concur with the Hebrew name.

The ceremony itself is printed in a separate pamphlet. There is a standard ceremony that must be followed, however, additional prayers may be included according to each family’s tradition.

After the ceremony, it is customary to provide a *Seudat Mitzvah* or festive meal. This does not need to be extravagant. All who are present partake in the meal, unless it is a fast day, for example Yom Kippur.

Care of the baby is most important. Being the center of attention for the first time in his life, he will be tired and hungry. At the conclusion of the ceremony, it is appropriate for the mother to take the baby to another room, feed him and if he is tired, allow him to sleep.

Please obtain the following “baby care” items for after the procedure:

Infant Tylenol®/acetaminophen (drops) (Dr. Sanford will review the dosing with you)
Bacitracin ointment

Please note: Since this is a surgical procedure, there will be an informed consent form to sign prior to the beginning of the procedure. Dr. Sanford will discuss the specifics of the procedure before proceeding.