

Your appointment at the FGM clinic

Department of Gynaecology
Information for Patients

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Your FGM clinic appointment

You have been offered an appointment at the FGM clinic.

FGM means female genital mutilation. It is also sometimes called female genital cutting or female circumcision.

This appointment is for women who have had FGM, or who think they may have had FGM. It is a health appointment. It is not to blame or judge you.

Why have I been sent this appointment?

You may have been referred because you told your midwife, doctor or another health professional that you have had FGM, or you think you may have had FGM.

If you are not pregnant, you can also be referred by your GP or contact the clinic yourself.

The clinic can help you understand if FGM may affect:

- your pregnancy
- your birth plan
- peeing
- periods
- sex
- pain or discomfort
- your emotional wellbeing

We can also see women who are not pregnant.

Who will I see?

You will be seen by female clinical staff.

This usually means:

- a specialist midwife
- a female consultant obstetrician/gynaecologist

If you need an interpreter we can arrange this. It is better not to use family members or friends to interpret for this appointment. The interpreter may be in-person or on the phone.

We will try to arrange a female interpreter where possible, but this may not always be possible.

You can ask questions at any time.

What happens at the appointment?

We will talk with you about your health and how you are feeling.

We may ask about:

- any problems peeing
- periods
- sex
- pain or discomfort
- pregnancy and birth
- your emotional wellbeing
- any worries you have

You only need to share what you feel able to share.

Will I need an examination?

We offer all women an external genital examination.

This means looking at the outside of the genital area. It is not an internal examination.

The examination helps us understand:

- what type of FGM you have had
- whether it may affect birth
- whether you may need a small procedure called deinfibulation

You can say no to an examination. You can ask questions first. You can ask us to stop at any time.

What is deinfibulation?

Some types of FGM can make the vaginal opening narrow. If this affects you, we may talk with you about a small procedure called deinfibulation.

This opens the scar tissue. It can help with sex, periods, peeing, vaginal examinations and birth.

If you need deinfibulation in pregnancy, we usually prefer to do this during the second trimester, around 20 weeks. If this is not possible, or you do not want it done during your pregnancy, it can be done during labour. We will talk this through with you and help you make a plan.

After birth, the scar tissue will not be closed again. This is against the law in the UK.

Birth planning

If you are pregnant, we will help you make a safe plan for birth.

This may include:

- whether you need deinfibulation
- when deinfibulation would be best
- what should be written in your birth plan
- whether you need support from other services

Support after the appointment

We may offer referral to other services if needed, such as:

- pelvic health or perinatal pelvic health services
- counselling or emotional wellbeing support
- safeguarding support
- other specialist services

We will discuss this with you.

If you need deinfibulation, we will give you separate information about the procedure and aftercare.

Safeguarding and the law

FGM is against the law in the UK. It is also against the law to arrange for a girl or woman to have FGM in another country.

If you are pregnant, we will talk with you about keeping children safe from FGM. This is a normal part of care for women with a history of FGM.

This does not mean you have done anything wrong.

However, health staff may need to share information if they are worried that a child or young person may be at risk.

Your information

We will record information about FGM in your health record.

The NHS also has to collect information about FGM cases. This information is used for national statistics.

Your name and personal details are not published.

Your information is kept private. Health staff will only share information if this is needed for your care, or if there is a concern that a child or young person may be at risk.

Important things to know

- This is a health appointment.
- You will not be judged.
- You can ask questions.
- You can say no to an examination.
- You can ask us to stop at any time.
- We are here to help you plan safe care.

Contact details

If you need to contact us at the FGM Clinic please call **0116 258 7770**, 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice
Visit www.uhleicester.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals.
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net

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If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net

We are a research hospital and you may be asked to take part in research