

What is FGM/C?

- Female genital mutilation or cutting (FGM/C) is a practice of cutting away part or all of a girl or young woman's external genitals for non-medical reasons.
- FGM/C can have a number of severe short-term and long-term physical, sexual and psychological consequences.
- FGM/C is a global practice, occurring in almost every continent in the world.
- It is estimated that 500,000 girls and women in the United States alone are either already cut or at risk of FGM/C.

FGM/C Is a Crime

Under federal law, it is illegal to:

- Carry out FGM/C or assist in carrying out FGM/C on a girl under 18
- Take a girl abroad for FGM/C, regardless of whether or not FGM/C is lawful there
- Assist with taking a girl out of the U.S. for the purposes of FGM/C

FGM/C also constitutes child abuse under all state laws. People can be jailed for up to five years for performing or arranging cutting. Certain states may have more serious penalties.

If You're Thinking of Carrying Out or Allowing FGM/C: Don't Do It

- FGM/C is NOT a religious requirement or obligation; instead, it is a centuries-old practice that predates Christianity and Islam
- It is NOT a 'sunna', or obligation, in Islam, and most Muslims around the world do not practice it
- FGM/C is also NOT condoned by Christian or Jewish teachings
- The procedure does not have any health benefits
- Survivors experience life-long suffering and some die. You can find information about the health effects of FGM/C at the following websites:
 - Equality Now: www.equalitynow.org
 - BCRHHR: www.bcrhr.org
 - African Women's Health Center: www.tiny.cc/awctr

Information provided by:

Healthy Tomorrow at
StopExcision.net
SusanBMcL@gmail.com
617-776-6524

Sahiyo at Sahiyo.com
info@sahiyo.com
857-209-4160

Feedback welcome on brochure

FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION or CUTTING

Protection and Treatment in Massachusetts



How to Get Help

If you think you or someone you know is at risk of being cut, there are a number of state, community, and national organizations and resources that can help:

State Organizations

- Massachusetts Dept. of Children and Families (DCF) at the child abuse hotline: 800-792-5200
- Massachusetts Office of Victim Assistance: 617-727-5200

Community Organizations

- Jane Doe, Inc.: 617-248-0922 ext. 212, www.janedoe.org
- DOVE Inc.: 888-314-3683, www.dovema.org
- Sahiyo: 857-209-4160, info@sahiyo.com
- Mass. Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC): www.mspsc.org

National Resources

- National Child Abuse Hotline: 800-4-A-CHILD (800-422-4453) (24-hour tip line to report a girl at risk or seek immediate help, with speakers of 180 languages)
- Homeland Security's US Citizenship & Immigration Services: information in 7 languages at www.uscis.gov/fgmc

If you think you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 911 and tell the police.

Legal Assistance/ Protective Orders

- You can receive legal assistance from a legal adviser or attorney: www.mass.gov/service-details/finding-a-lawyer
- Legal aid can help meet the costs of legal advice, family mediation, and representation in court: Masslegalservices.org/findlegalaid
- If you or someone you know is at risk, you can obtain a domestic violence protection or restraining order: www.mass.gov/service-details/massachusetts-law-about-domestic-violence-209a
- A civil protection order could, for example, force parents to hand over their daughter's passport, so she can't be taken abroad.

Medical Treatment

If you have been cut, medical treatment is available at:

- Boston Center for Refugee Health and Human Rights at Boston Medical Center: 771 Albany St, Boston, MA 02118, 617-414-4794, www.bcrhhr.org
- African Women's Health Center at Brigham and Women's Hospital: 75 Francis St., Boston, MA 02115, 617-732-4740, www.tiny.cc/awctr

Information about your medical treatment cannot be shared with anyone outside the clinic/hospital without your permission.

Reporting

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You may be fearful to seek assistance or report your concerns, particularly if it involves parents or family members, but your safety is the highest priority.

State and private organizations, such as the DCF, are used to working with families on difficult matters like these.

You also might be afraid to report your concerns because you are worried that people will find out, but you can have your identity kept secret in legal matters.

Teachers and Health Professionals

Health and social care professionals and teachers are legally obliged to report cases where they know, or have reason to suspect, that FGM/C has been carried out and the victim is under 18 years old. Read more about mandatory reporting of FGM/C at: www.mass.gov/service-details/massachusetts-law-about-child-abuse-and-neglect.