

Female genital mutilation – African well woman's clinic

This information sheet has been given to you to help answer some of the questions you may have about female genital mutilation (FGM). If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor, midwife or nurse caring for you.

The African well woman's clinic gives open access for women (over 18 years old) who have been affected by FGM (also known as female circumcision). We provide help, information, support, referrals and surgical operation.

What is FGM?

The World Health Organization defines FGM as all procedures that involve either partially or totally removing the external female genitalia, or other injury to the female genitals, carried out for cultural or other reasons that are not medically necessary. FGM is an abuse and safeguarding issue.

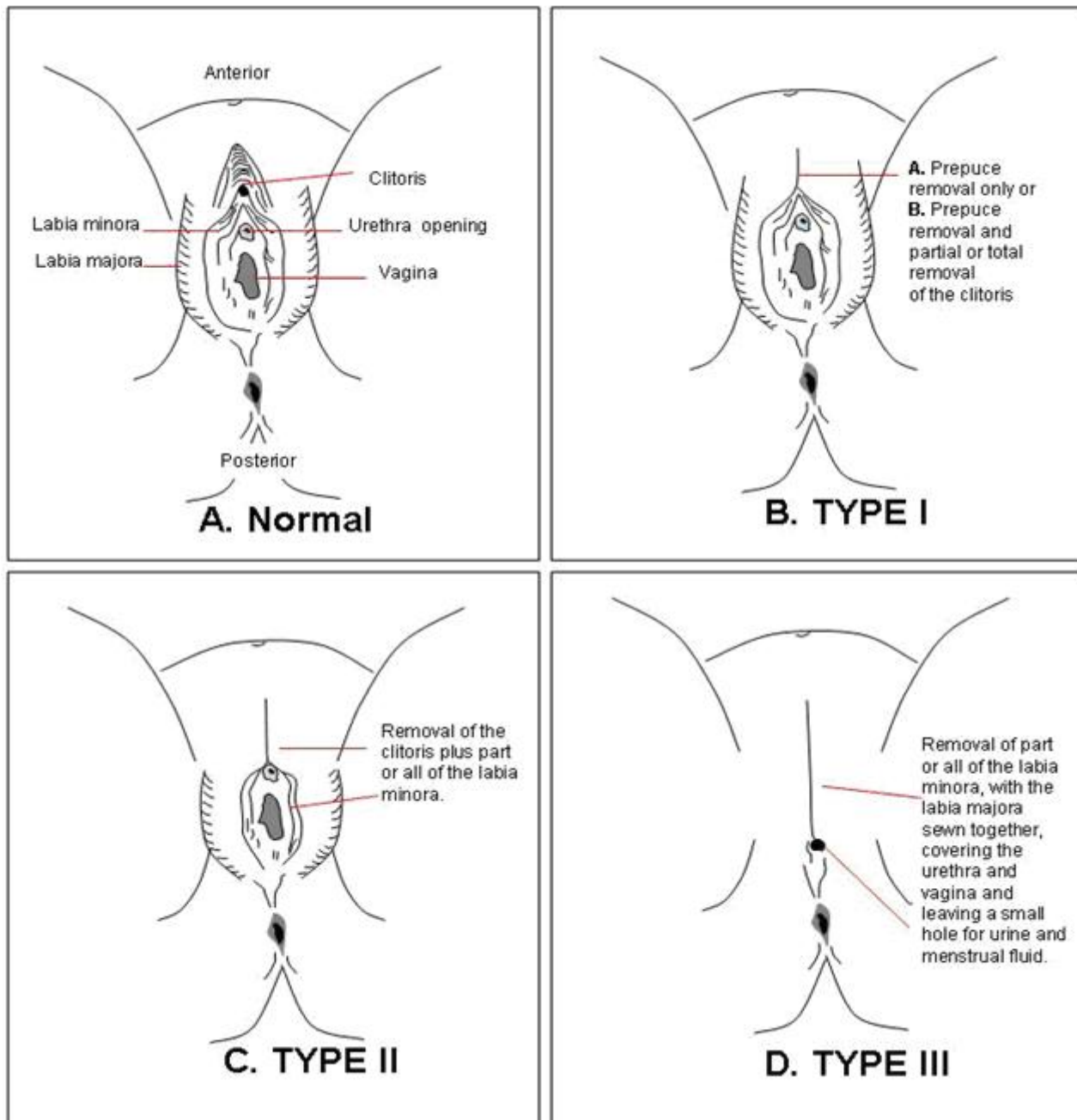
Leading figures of the Islamic and Christian faiths are opposed to FGM as well as international organisations like the World Health Organization and United Nations.

Types of FGM

FGM can be classified into four different types:

- **Type one** – is described as removal by cutting of the prepuce, with or without cutting off part or the entire clitoris
- **Type two** – removal by cutting of the clitoris and cutting off part or the entire labia minora
- **Type three** – removal by cutting off part or all of the external genitalia, and stitching or narrowing of the vaginal opening also known as 'infibulation'
- **Type four** – unclassified: this includes pricking, piercing or cutting of the clitoris and/or labia, stretching of the clitoris and/or labia, cauterisation by burning of the clitoris and surrounding tissue.

Different types of FGM



Facts about FGM

FGM creates many problems. Immediate problems include:

- women and girls dying from the short-term complications of FGM, such as haemorrhage, shock and infection
- some women also have long-term problems such as recurrent urinary and vaginal infections, pain during sexual intercourse and complications during childbirth, such as severe bleeding and obstructed labour.

Some of the local terminology used for FGM

Term	Language/Country
Tahoor , Khifad, Tahara	Arabic
Mekhnisab	Tigrino
Gudi niin	Somalia
Bondo	Sierra-Leone
Ibi/Ugwu	Igbo/Nigeria
Kutairi	Swahili Kenya
Absum	Harrari
Megrez	Aramaic

What does the law say about FGM in the UK?

FGM is illegal and against the law in the UK. The Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 makes it an offence for anyone in the UK to aid, abet, counsel or procure FGM outside of UK.

The penalty for this offence is a prison sentence of up to 14 years. Since 31 October 2015, all professionals are required by law to report 'known' cases of FGM in under 18s to the police by calling 101.

You can apply for a protection order if you, or someone you know, is at risk of FGM. This will help to keep you (or the person you know) safe from another person (the 'respondent').

What do we offer at The African Well Woman's Clinic?

The African Well Woman's Clinic offers support, advice, information, counselling, referral to other agencies, reversal, and holistic care, including advice on family planning to women who are living with FGM.

We are very flexible and care is tailored to our client's needs. We have access to interpreting services if you do not speak or understand English. Referral to this service is via your GP, practice nurse or midwife.

We offer training to those working in the community, social and health professionals on how to routinely and sensitively ask women questions about their circumcision. We link women to community groups for support.

How to find us

St Thomas Hospital

8th Floor North-Wing

Antenatal Clinic

London SE1 7EH

Nearest Station – Waterloo or Westminster

Guy's Hospital

McNair Centre

Ground Floor of Southwark Wing

St Thomas Street, London SE1 9RT

Nearest Station – London Bridge

Further information

Africa Advocacy Foundation

t: 020 7738 7238 or 07877 413 247 **w:** www.africadvocacy.org/

Foreign and Commonwealth office

t: 020 7008 1500 **w:** www.fco.gov.uk/fgm

FORWARD

t: 020 8960 4000 **w:** www.forwarduk.org.uk/

Childline, free helpline for children open 24 hours a day

t: 0800 11 11 **w:** www.childline.org.uk

NSPCC – Child Protection Helpline advice for adults worried about a child

t: 0808 800 5000 **w:** www.nspcc.org.uk/

Metropolitan Police, Child abuse Investigating Command/Project Azure

t: 020 7161 2888

w: www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-resource-pack

Contact us

www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/our-services/gynaecology/overview.aspx

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline. **t:** 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch:

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day. **t:** 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health. **w:** www.nhs.uk

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