

# Is it a good idea - to have your daughters cut?



This brochure has been prepared by the Norwegian Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS), working together with NAKMI. The online version is available from our website, [www.nkvts.no](http://www.nkvts.no)

3rd revision, revised 2019

Printed examples can be ordered from [postmottak@nkvts.no](mailto:postmottak@nkvts.no) or by telephone 22 59 55 00.

In connection with the Government action plan against genital mutilation 2008-2011, NKVTS was assigned a national competence function to combat genital mutilation. NKVTS shall carry out research, disseminate knowledge and provide advice to professionals working in the field.

Design: Christine Istad  
Photo: Luth & Co AS



# Social pressure

It can be hard to break with a tradition you have been taught to see as necessary. If your family is putting pressure on you to have your daughter circumcised ('cut') it can be tough to stand up against them.

Don't let yourself be pressured into allowing something to be done to your child that can harm her!

This brochure

- Will help you stand against pressures to have your daughter cut, and
- Give you arguments you can use when anyone tries to pressure you



**Our bodies are created perfect**

# Your child is an individual person and has a right to her own body

You can help your daughter by protecting her whole body. No religion – not Islam, not Christianity – gives parents the right to have healthy parts removed from a girl's body.

No parents want to harm their children. If you knew more about the consequences of the different kinds of circumcision, you too would want to stop practicing the custom.

**All parents want to do the right thing for their children –  
Be sure you make the right choice!**





# Here are some of the things you can do to resist social pressure:

- Talk over the issue with others who oppose the practice
- Discuss with friends you trust what they can do to help you and your family resist
- Take precautions when your daughters are visiting relatives in your home country or other places – particularly if you are not with them to protect them



# What you can say to anyone who tries to pressure you into having your daughter cut:

- I will not risk the death of my child, or that they will have to live with pain their entire life.
- I have been given a chance in Norway to escape from the tradition. Therefore I will resist.
- I respect human rights.
- I will not commit a crime.
- I do not wish to risk being imprisoned. If I am in prison, I cannot help my family.
- I do not want to take the risk that my child will blame me when she is older.
- I want my daughter to be in charge of her own body.
- I respect God (Allah), who has given the child a perfect body.
- I will give my daughter good standards and values so that she will in any case be a decent person.
- I want my daughter to marry a man who appreciates her whole being, and does not want to take anything away.
- I love my home country and my culture - but not this tradition.
- Female circumcision is forbidden in 25 African countries.
- 30 African countries have set up national committees against female circumcision and other harmful traditions.
- Efforts are being made to combat female circumcision in all countries where the tradition presently exists.

# The Norwegian authorities are working to protect children against genital mutilation by means of a special law with an extended period of application

## THE LAW

All forms of genital mutilation of girls are unlawful. Punishment is imprisonment for up to 6 years. If the procedure causes illness or loss of work incapacity, an incurable defect, flaw or injury, death or considerable harm to health or body, it is considered aggravated genital mutilation. The punishment for this offence is imprisonment for up to 15 years (Penal Code Sections 284 and 285).

Both the person who carries out the procedure and anyone who participated can be punished. All forms of circumcision, including 'sunna' circumcision, is harmful and prohibited.

## How long will you be liable under the law?

**- You daughter can report to the authorities you until she is 38 years old.**

The legal limitation period begins to run when the girl is 18 years old. After this she has 10 years (if the procedure is considered genital mutilation) or 20 years (if the procedure is considered aggravated genital mutilation) to decide if she will report her parents to the authorities because she has been circumcised.

This means that your daughter can make you legally liable for the circumcision.



**Be proud of your culture  
and who you are - but  
fight harmful traditions**



## It is NOT a good thing to circumcise your daughter, because:

- You can be responsible for the girl having problems and injuries – of a health-related, psychological and social nature. Let the child keep her whole body.
- There may be division and conflict within the family when the girl becomes an adult and understands what you have taken away from her.
- You will have to carry the secret of having broken the law. Female circumcision is a crime under Norwegian law. It is difficult to help your family if you are in prison.
- Your daughter must bear the secret that you have committed a crime. The child's best interest is your responsibility – help her to decide over her own body.



**Help your child protect her body**

# Be proud of your culture

Gain confidence and build your identity around the positive aspects of your culture. Female circumcision is harmful, unnecessary and illegal. Nurture the good, wholesome traditions.

Speak to your children about values and morals. Teach them well-founded moral choices so that they can become decent human beings.

If your daughter wishes to have opening surgery, you must support her, so that she can get rid of her health problems.

A woman does not need to be circumcised in order to be an honorable woman. Virtue and fidelity come from attitude and values.

---

## You can contact these organizations if you require support and wish to speak to someone:

**Red Cross helpline for forced marriage and genital mutilation**, tel. 815 55 201.

**Professional team dedicated to combating forced marriage, genital mutilation and negative social coercion**, tel. 47 80 90 50

**Amathea**, [www.amathea.no](http://www.amathea.no), tel. 815 32 005.

**SEIF**, [www.seifnorge.wordpress.com](http://www.seifnorge.wordpress.com), offices in Oslo, Trondheim, Ålesund, Kristiansand and Bergen, tel. 22 03 48 30.

**PMV**, <https://kirkenbymisjon.no/pmv-flerkulturelt-ressurscenter-i-oslo/>, tel. 230 60 380.

**Intercultural Health Info**, <http://tverrkulturellhelse.info/>

**Regional Resource Center for Violence, Traumatic Stress and Suicide Prevention Studies**: [www.rvts.no](http://www.rvts.no), RVTS West, tel. 55 97 66 95, RVTS East, tel. 22 58 60 00, RVTS Central, tel. 72 82 20 05, RVTS South, tel. 22 58 60 00, RVTS North, tel. 77 75 43 80.

Help your child to own all her body



**NASJONALT KUNNSKAPSSENTER  
OM VOLD OG TRAUMATISK STRESS**

[kjonnsllestelse.nkvts.no](https://kjonnsllestelse.nkvts.no)