

## **FGM - Female genital mutilation / Female circumcision**

### **What is female genital mutilation?**

Female genital mutilation (FGM) involves the partial or complete removal of the female genitalia. Or to damage the genitals.

In many countries, young girls and women are circumcised for traditional or cultural reasons. It is particularly widespread in Islamic regions in Africa.

In Africa, FGM is often called "the thing". It has been a fixed ritual performed on girls and women for around 5,000 years. From infancy to adulthood. Circumcision is mainly performed before the onset of puberty. The woman is supposed to prove to her future husband that she is still a virgin.

FGM is also often required by the community. It is seen as a symbol of belonging to the group and of femininity. Anyone who refuses is rejected by the community.

Circumcision is carried out with the help of knives and razor blades, but also acacia thorns and snares. The "circumcisers" are often women of advanced age who have been doing this for many years.

The WHO distinguishes between four types of female genital mutilation:

- Type 1: The clitoris is partially or completely removed. Or the clitoral hood is cut away (clitoridectomy)
- Type 2: The clitoris and labia minora (labia minora) are partially or completely removed. This type of mutilation is carried out in around 85 per cent of all FGM practices
- Type 3: The clitoris and the labia minora and labia majora are removed. The rest of the vulva is closed with acacia thorns. A foreign body (e.g. a straw) is inserted. This is to prevent the wound from growing completely closed. This leaves a small opening for urinating and menstruating
- Type 4: Extreme brutality is used here. The clitoris and labia are mutilated by pricking, cutting, stretching or cauterising

### **What are the consequences of circumcision?**

Many girls die during the mutilation. Or later from the consequences. There are many dangerous after-effects of the mutilation:

- Incontinence,
- pain,
- heavy bleeding,
- complications during sexual intercourse and childbirth, infertility,
- risk of HIV and hepatitis infection,
- blood poisoning and tetanus,
- states of shock,
- psychological trauma,
- depression,
- Sexual satisfaction is also usually no longer possible after FGM.

## How often does female genital mutilation occur?

Worldwide, 150 million women are affected by FGM. Every day, 8,000 girls are circumcised. One every 11 seconds.

## Is circumcision permitted in Germany?

In Germany, female circumcision (female genital mutilation (FGM)) is **prohibited**. Since September 2013, FGM has been punishable by imprisonment. It is also **forbidden** for parents **to have their daughter circumcised abroad**. This is also prosecuted under German criminal law.

Girls and young women can apply for asylum in Germany if they are threatened with being circumcised.

## Are you afraid that you are going to be circumcised? Or has it already happened?


Then you can contact the helpline

 [08000116016](tel:08000116016)

The staff at the helpline are there for you day and night. Also in different languages.


## Is it possible to reverse the circumcision?


In Germany, it is possible to reconstruct the clitoris. This operation can be performed by plastic surgeons. You can ask a gynaecologist for advice.


A  ["Centre for victims of genital mutilation"](#) was founded in Berlin. This centre treats not only the physical but also the psychological consequences. The centre is free and anonymous. You do not need health insurance.


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Further addresses can be found here:


 [SOLWODI Ludwigshafen](#) - Counselling centre on FGM. The counselling centre also helps with questions about forced marriage, honour killings and human trafficking

 [NALA e.V.](#) - NALA is primarily campaigning against female genital mutilation (FGM) in African countries, in Germany and worldwide.

 [Forum FGM](#) - Together against genital mutilation

 [Caritas Mainz](#) - Caritas supports, among other things, training courses on the topic

 [Pro Familia Nuremberg](#) - Specialist centre for FGM\_C. Pro Familia provides information on the topic in various languages

 [Stop Mutilation e.V.](#) - a guide for educational professionals