

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

We offer a women-led service in a friendly environment.

Contact information

West London African
Women's Community Clinic

West London Centre for Sexual Health
Charing Cross Hospital (South Wing)
Fulham Palace Road
London
W6 8RF

West London African
Women's Hospital Clinic

Gynaecology Outpatients
Chelsea and Westminster Hospital
369 Fulham Road
London
SW10 9NH

T: 020 3315 3344
E: fgmwestlondon@nhs.net

Membership and Patient Advice & Liaison Service (M-PALS)

If you require information, support or advice about our services, you can contact the M-PALS office on the ground floor of the hospital just behind the main reception.

Alternatively, you can feedback your comments/suggestions on one of our comment cards, available at the M-PALS office, or on a feedback form on our website www.chelwest.nhs.uk.

We value your opinion and invite you to provide us with feedback of the service. In some of our wards and departments we have devices that enable patients/carers to give us their feedback before going home. Please ask a member of staff for more information.

T: 020 3315 6727
E: m-pals@chelwest.nhs.uk

Chelsea and Westminster Hospital
369 Fulham Road
London, SW10 9NH

T: 020 8746 8000
W: www.chelwest.nhs.uk

Portions of the content of this leaflet were adapted with the permission of the Bristol Safeguarding Children Board.

August 2011

العربية • বাংলা • Español • فارسی
Lietuviškai • Polski • Português
Русский • Soomaali • ትግርኛ

☎ 020 3315 6727



Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

West London African
Women's Service

Community support
and information

Choose
Chelsea and
Westminster

Chelsea and Westminster Hospital **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust



About Female Genital Mutilation

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)—also known as female circumcision or cutting—is most widely practised across 28 countries in Africa.

These include Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria and Djibouti.

FGM is also practised in countries outside Africa including Indonesia, Malaysia, Yemen and Iraq.

Girls and women from a variety of religious backgrounds are affected as this is a social—not a religious—custom.

The circumcision of girls predates Islam by many centuries, and has been found to date to the time of the pharaohs in Egypt.

Types of FGM

Female circumcision and cutting is a strong custom and tradition. However, this custom is against the law in the UK and many other countries.

FGM Type 1

Sunna—removal of the hood of the clitoris

FGM Type 2

Excision—removal of the clitoris with partial or total excision of the labia minora

FGM Type 3

Infibulation—removal of the clitoris and labia minora with narrowing by stitching of the vaginal opening

FGM Type 4

All other types of harmful traditional practices that mutilate the female genitalia, including pricking, cutting, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterisation

How we can help

We are here to help women and children who have had FGM and are experiencing problems.

The most common problems are:

- difficulties in pregnancy and childbirth
- urinary infections
- vaginal infections
- painful periods
- problems with sex

In many cases, these problems can be treated or prevented by a minor surgical procedure known as deinfibulation, or reversal, in which scar tissue is opened up to restore the normal vaginal opening.

This procedure can usually be performed under local anaesthetic.

Services we offer

- All-female team
- Interpreter service
- Someone to listen to you
- Deinfibulation (reversal)
- General gynaecology advice
- Smear tests
- Contraception advice
- Sexual health checks

Our service is free and confidential.

If you are having problems and would like to see us please make an appointment by telephone or email.

Our team

The FGM service is run by an all-female team:

- Consultant gynaecologist
- Specialist midwife
- Sexual health doctor
- Health adviser (T: 020 8846 1579)
- Somali support worker

FGM and the law

All types of FGM have been illegal in the UK since the 1985 Female Circumcision Prohibition Act. The new Female Genital Mutilation Act (2003) updates and extends the original act.

The Act states that it is *'an offence to take UK nationals and those with permanent UK residency overseas for the purpose of circumcision, to aid and abet, counsel or procure the carrying out of FGM. It is illegal for anyone to circumcise women or children for cultural or non-medical reasons'*.

A person convicted of an offence under the FGM Act 2003 is liable to imprisonment for up to 14 years.

Re-infibulation is also illegal—women will not be sewn back up after childbirth.

Notes

