

# Misconceptions

## about excision / female genital mutilation:

1/

### They say FGM is prescribed by religion:

In reality, no religion imposes FGM. It originates from customs that existed before religions. It isn't mentioned in the Quran.

2/

### They say it's necessary to ensure the purity and virginity of girls and the fidelity of wives...

In reality, a person's sexual conduct depends on his/her principles and values and has nothing to do with having a part of his/her body cut.

3/

### They say FGM makes women more fertile:

On the contrary; FGM may cause genital infections that make women infertile. Childbirth can be more complicated and cause foetal distress. It increases the likelihood of having a Caesarean.

4/

### They say you should respect customs and traditions:

In reality, some customs and traditions are good for your health, while others are very dangerous and have to change like female genital mutilation.

5/

### They say it's good for girls:

On the contrary; it's good to protect girls from any damage they might suffer. Avoiding a practice that has harmful, lifelong consequences for the health and well-being of girls and women is a tremendous act of love.



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IMPORTANT INFORMATION

# for the Health of Women and Children

cutting / excision / ablation / circumcision / genital mutilation



## Have you heard of the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM) or do you know what it is?

**Female genital mutilation, also known as *cutting, excision or circumcision*, is a practice that consists of fully or partially cutting the genitals of girls and women, causing lifelong damage to their physical and mental health.**



## Do you know what health **consequences** it has?

- Death by traumatic shock, infection and haemorrhaging
- Risk of HIV transmission
- Fistulas, kidney complications and very painful menstruation
- Urinary infections, pain around the scar, inflammation
- Infertility
- Increased maternal mortality, foetal distress and infant mortality
- Anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, fear, and the feeling of having been betrayed by the people you love and trust
- Pain during sexual intercourse, and reduced sensitivity and pleasure

## What to do...

### What can you do if you or another woman you know are affected by female genital mutilation?

If you've suffered female genital mutilation, inform **your family doctor, nurse or midwife**, so that they can offer you the support and care you need. Always remember that nobody's going to judge you; you'll be treated with respect and provided with all the information and care you need.

If you need **somebody who speaks your language** to help you communicate, you can request this.

### If you're concerned about a girl of any age who might be at risk of female genital mutilation...

You can speak to your:

- Family doctor
- Nurse
- Midwife
- Social worker
- Teacher

You can also get in touch with **associations and NGOs** like UNAF: +34 91.446.31.62/50 or Médicos del Mundo (Spain) +34 91.315.60.94

If you have an **emergency**, you can call:

**016** (hotline for victims of gender-based violence)  
**062** (teléfono de emergencias de la Guardia Civil).

## Many people have stopped practising FGM around the world

Traditions are the customs, beliefs and values of a community that are passed down from generation to generation. A community's traditions can change over the years as a result of its new knowledge and experiences.

At least 5 million men and women from 1,900 communities in over 16 African countries have stopped the traditional practice of female genital mutilation, because they've realised it's harmful to the health and lives of women, girls and the entire community.

**You too can help to stop the practice in your community.**

## Laws

**Female genital mutilation (excision, cutting...) is a form of violence against women and a violation of their human rights**, and there are laws that prohibit the practice in many countries.

Spain has a **Law Against Gender-Based Violence**, which provides resources and protection for women and girls.

You can call **016**.

**Female genital mutilation is also prohibited in Spain and punishable by law: Offenders can be sentenced to 6 to 12 years in prison and lose custody over their daughters.** The law is equally enforced against persons who are involved in any way by organising or mediating in such practices, and it is also enforced when such acts are ultimately performed outside Spain.

Lastly, women and girls affected by female genital mutilation or at risk of the practice have the right to seek asylum in Spain for gender-related reasons. You can call +34 915550698 (CEAR).