

Use of Acetaminophen in Circumcision Pain Management

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Problem: According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2005, 65% of baby boys born in hospitals each year are circumcised. Newborn babies have as much ability to experience pain as older children. Studies have shown that infants are capable of experiencing pain and that they respond to noxious stimuli. When performed without pain medicine, circumcision is painful.

Evidence: A review of current evidence was conducted describing the use of and role of acetaminophen for pain relief during and after circumcision. The evidence was summarized and practice recommendations were made.

Strategy: Standing orders utilizing the evidence collected, were then developed and successfully implemented. Pediatricians and nursing staff were presented the data on using acetaminophen for effective pain management. Parents were educated on the effects of pain and pain management techniques.

Practice Change: The evidence supports administering 10 to 15 milligrams, per kilogram of birth weight, of acetaminophen one hour before circumcision, and every four to six hours for 24 hours after the procedure. Standing orders established require acetaminophen 10 milligrams per kilogram one hour prior to circumcision. Then five doses of acetaminophen every four hours post-procedure are prescribed.

Evaluation: A baseline pain rating should be taken before the first administration of acetaminophen. Pain levels should be obtained every time the newborn is assessed and with every administration of acetaminophen post circumcision.

Results: In the evidence-based practice researched, acetaminophen has a positive impact on neonatal pain rating scores. It was found to be effective at reducing postoperative pain and increasing the infants responses.

Recommendations: Administration of acetaminophen pre and post circumcision is included in the standing orders for circumcision. It is the responsibility of the health care team to inform parents, advocate for the newborn, and provide interventions to relieve or eliminate pain.

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