Female Genital Mutilation
Advice for Parents

FGM is an extremely harmful practice with devastating health consequences for girls and women. Some girls die from blood loss or infection as a direct result of the procedure.

If you suspect a girl has undergone or is at risk of FGM

Call Children’s Social Care (020) 8871 6622
or (020) 8871 6000 (after hours)
and the Metropolitan Police 101
If a girl is at immediate risk call 999

Wandsworth Clinical Commissioning Group
What is FGM?
FGM stands for Female Genital Mutilation. It is also known as Female Genital Cutting or Female Circumcision. This practice is not related to male circumcision and is not accepted in any major religion.

Where does FGM take place?
FGM is a cultural practice which commonly takes place in at least 28 African countries and some countries in the Middle-East and Asia. There has also been a worrying increase of the practice taking place within migrant communities in other parts of the world, including the UK.

FGM is a Human Rights Violation and is illegal in the UK
The FGM Act 2003 makes it a criminal offence to:
- Carry out FGM in the UK or to take a girl abroad for the procedure;
- Assist with carrying out FGM in the UK;
- Assist a girl to carry out FGM on herself in the UK; or to
- Assist someone from outside of the UK to carry out FGM on a UK national or permanent UK resident.

A person found guilty of the offence can face 14 years in prison, a fine - or both.

FGM has harmful consequences. There are no health benefits
FGM can kill - It’s an extremely harmful practice and places a girl at risk of devastating health consequences. Some girls can die from blood loss or infection as a result of the procedure.

Some examples of immediate health risks:
- Severe pain and shock
- Severe blood loss
- Infection
- Tetanus
- Difficulty in passing urine
- HIV transmission
- Life changing injuries or death

Long-term implications include:
- Urinary and menstrual problems
- Recurring risk of infection, including: cysts, abscesses, ulcers, chronic pelvic infections and urinary tract infections
- Pain during sex and lack of pleasurable sensation
- Psychological consequences, including: post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and severe depression

Female Genital Mutilation can affect a girl’s future relationships and may require her to undergo surgery. Women who have undergone FGM are also likely to experience difficulty in childbirth.

What to expect from your GP, Health Visitor and child’s school
- You will be asked by your health professional at GP surgeries and maternity services if you have FGM or if you intend to perform FGM on your daughter. The Department of Health requires this information to be recorded.
- Your health professional or child’s school can provide you with information about FGM.
- Your child’s school will ask you about FGM if you are travelling to a country where FGM is practised.
- You can access any of the services for FGM on your own, or you can be referred by your GP.
- If FGM is suspected, medical and school staff are legally required to report it and follow child protection procedures.

Other words for FGM
Sunna, Gudiniin, Tahara, Bondo

Every year 20,000 girls under the age of 15 are at risk of FGM in the UK.

Types of Female Genital Mutilation

**Type 1: “Clitoridectomy”**
This can involve either removing the clitoris or the clitoral hood.

**Type 2: “Excision”**
This involves the removal of the clitoris and inner lips of the vagina.

**Type 3: “Infibulation”**
This involves cutting the clitoris, inner and outer lips of the vagina and sewing or sealing them together, leaving only a small opening.

**Type 4: “Other”**
All other harmful practices for non-medical purposes including pricking, piercing, cutting, scraping and burning of female genitalia.