Potential health consequences of Female Genital Mutilation

Created by the National FGM Centre in collaboration with Juliet Albert (Specialist FGM Midwife, Sunflower Clinic)

Type 1
Partial to total removal of the clitoral hood and/or clitoris

- **Short Term**
  - Pain during sexual intercourse due to **scarring**.
  - It may feel tight in the clitoral area which can be very painful.
  - Damage to urine hole, can cause **incontinence** and pain when passing urine.
  - Loss of sensation which may affect sexual pleasure.

- **Long Term**
  - In childbirth women are more likely to suffer **bleeding** as scar tissue may not stretch during labour.
  - Prone to **urinary and thrush infections**.
  - **Anxiety/Depression/PTSD/Flashbacks**
  - **Cysts/Fistulas**

Type 2
Partial to total removal of the clitoris and inner labia and/or outer labia

- **Short Term**
  - Pain - The clitoris contains numerous blood vessels and the most nerve endings in the female body.
  - **Broken limbs** - If the girl was held down or restrained.

- **Long Term**
  - Sexual intercourse and cervical smears may be difficult and painful or impossible if the opening is very small.
  - More likely to have **pain** and **blood clots** during menstruation.
  - Increased risk of **pelvic inflammatory disease**
  - **Possible infertility**

Type 3
Usually includes partial to total removal of the clitoris and inner labia and/or outer labia, with inner labia **sewn/fused together** leaving a small hole.

- **Short Term**
  - **Shock** - both physical and emotional
  - Excessive **bleeding** (haemorrhaging)
  - **Death**

- **Long Term**
  - Sexual intercourse and cervical smears may be difficult and painful or impossible if the opening is very small.
  - More likely to have **pain** and **blood clots** during menstruation.
  - Increased risk of **pelvic inflammatory disease**
  - **Possible infertility**

Type 4
Any other injury to the genitalia including piercing, scraping, burning, stretching and pricking.

- **Short Term**
  - **Shock** - both physical and emotional
  - Excessive **bleeding** (haemorrhaging)
  - **Death**

- **Long Term**
  - **Infections** such as HIV, Hepatitis, Septicaemia and Tetanus.
  - **Pain** - The clitoris contains numerous blood vessels and the most nerve endings in the female body.
  - **Broken limbs** - If the girl was held down or restrained.

**Remember**
A small bleed or piercing of the genitalia, may not be visible many years later however the woman may remember being held down, bleeding and being in pain.

If FGM is carried out as a baby, the woman may not remember, and may not become aware until later in life. Some women may not experience any health consequences.