

FGM/C refers to all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. It may be called “female circumcision” in some parts of the world. The practice has no health benefits and can lead to a range of short-term and long-term physical and mental health problems.

What are the health consequences of FGM/C?

Immediate complications can include:

- Severe pain
- Excessive bleeding (hemorrhage)
- Genital tissue swelling
- Fever
- Infections e.g., tetanus
- Urinary problems
- Wound healing problems
- Injury to surrounding genital tissue
- Shock
- Death

Long-term complications can include:

- Urinary problems (painful urination, urinary tract infections)
- Vaginal problems (discharge, itching, bacterial vaginosis and other infections)
- Menstrual problems (painful menstruations, difficulty in passing menstrual blood, etc.)
- Scar tissue and keloid
- Sexual problems (pain during intercourse, decreased satisfaction, etc.)
- Increased risk of childbirth complications (difficult delivery, excessive bleeding, caesarean section, need to resuscitate the baby, etc.) and newborn deaths
- Need for later surgeries
- Psychological problems (depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, low self-esteem, etc.)

For additional information on the health consequences of FGM/C, please visit the World Health Organization website at <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation>

Call the Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline at 800-4-A-CHILD (800-422-4453) for information or assistance if:

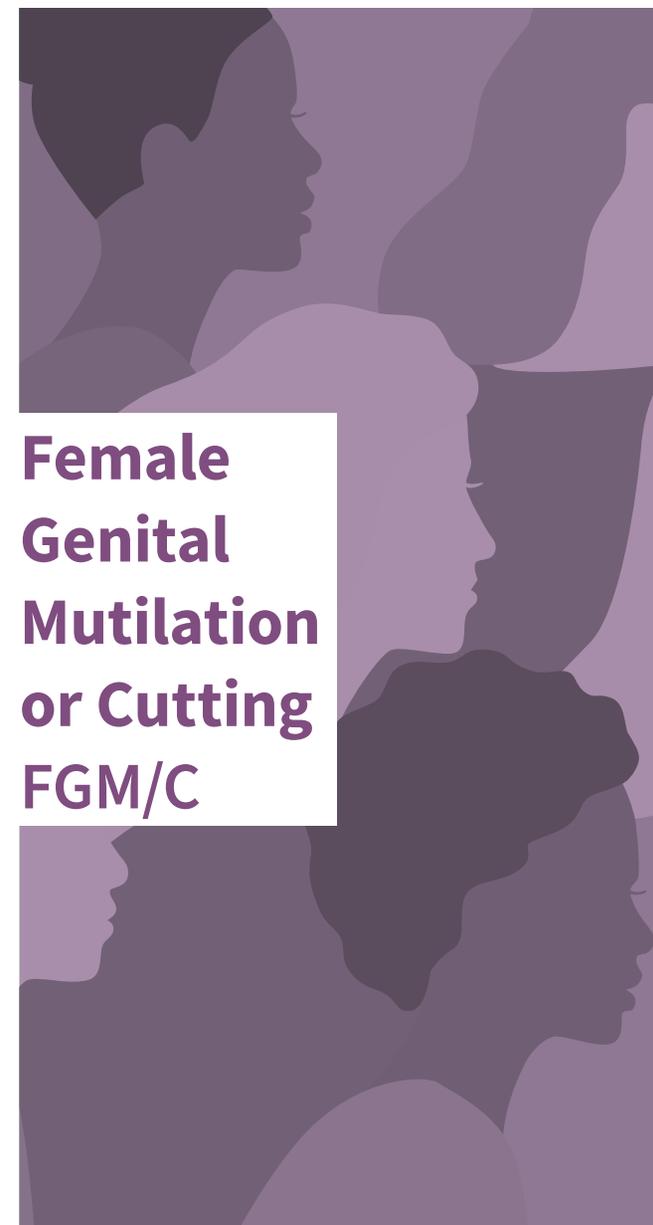
- You believe you are at risk of FGM/C;
- You have undergone FGM/C;
- You have questions about FGM/C;
- You have information about someone who is performing FGM/C in the United States; or
- You know of someone who may be at risk of FGM/C in the United States or in another country.

You may be eligible for certain immigration benefits for victims of crime or persecution if you have undergone FGM/C or fear you are at risk of FGM/C.

For more information, visit: uscis.gov/humanitarian/female-genital-mutilation-or-cutting-fgmc



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services



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If you have undergone FGM/C:

- It is *not* your fault.
- You have *not* violated any U.S. laws by undergoing the procedure.
- It will not negatively affect your eligibility to travel to the United States or to receive immigration benefits from the United States.

Researchers in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Reproductive Health (CDC) estimate that as many as

500,000

girls and women in the United States have undergone FGM/C in the past or may be at risk for undergoing FGM/C in the future.

More than

200 million girls and women
alive today have
been cut in **30** countries

in Africa, the Middle East and Asia where FGM is concentrated.

By 2030, if the practice continues at current levels,

4.6 million girls will be at risk of FGM each year.

The U.S. government opposes FGM/C.

The U.S. government opposes FGM/C, no matter the type, degree, or severity, and no matter what the motivation for performing it. The U.S. government understands that FGM/C may be carried out in accordance with traditional beliefs and as part of adulthood initiation rites. Nevertheless, the U.S. government considers FGM/C to be a serious human rights abuse, and a form of gender-based violence and child abuse.

The United States is committed to ending FGM/C.

Ending FGM/C is part of the U.S. government's efforts to protect the health and well-being of women and girls and advance their rights. The U.S. government is working in the United States and in other countries to help educate people about the serious, damaging effects of FGM/C.



It is against U.S. law to attempt to perform FGM/C in the United States on someone under the age of 18, or to transport them inside or outside the United States so FGM/C can be performed. It is also against U.S. law for parents or legal guardians to consent to or facilitate FGM/C on a minor.

Violation of the law is punishable by up to 10 years in prison, fines, or both. There is no exception for performing FGM/C because of tradition or culture. Cutting and other procedures that injure the female genital organs of a girl under 18 are prohibited under U.S. law. Additionally, anyone in the United States who performs FGM/C on a woman 18 years old or older without her consent may be charged with a crime under state law.

Violating the law against FGM/C can have immigration consequences.

Performing or assisting in FGM/C, even without a criminal conviction, may have significant immigration consequences, including making the offender inadmissible to or removable from the United States and ineligible for some immigration benefits.

If you:

- Believe you are at risk of FGM/C;
- Have undergone FGM/C;
- Have questions about FGM/C;
- Have questions about someone performing FGM/C in the United States; or
- Know someone who may be at risk of FGM/C in the United States or another country;

Please contact for information or assistance:

- Childhelp National Child Abuse Hotline: 800-4-A-CHILD (800-422-4453)
- U.S. End FGM/C Network: endfgmnetwork.org