

CCAR RESPONSA

New American Reform Responsa

102. Circumcision and AIDS

QUESTION: What precautions should a *mohel* take for his own protection and for the protection of other children in view of the AIDS epidemic? (Mark Cohen, New Orleans LA)

ANSWER: As AIDS is transmitted through blood and it is possible that the *mohel* may injure himself in the process of the circumcision, he should take every precaution possible. There would be no problem about wearing gloves. This would also be in keeping with the tradition (*Sefer Haberit* #179). The *mohel* should, of course, always be careful about the cleanliness and sterility of instruments used for the circumcision. It is presumed that our Reform *mohalim* would use the highest medical standards in their procedures and that there would be no reason to question them on these matters.

As we do not perform *metzitzah* either directly or indirectly and use other methods for seeing to it that the wound is clean and the danger of infection is minimized, we would have no other contact with the blood of the child. From Talmudic times we have sought and followed the best current medical opinion (Nidah 22b; *Yad Hil Deah* 4.1, 23ff; *Shulhan Arukh Orah Hayim* 571; Moses *Sofer Hatam Sofer Yoreh Deah* 175; *Even Haezer* Vol 2 #2; Moshe Feinstein *Igrot Mosheh Yoreh Deah* Vol 2 #69). In all of these matters we, therefore, rely on current medical advice and take the necessary precautions.

January 1991