

After school one day, Jeff didn't want to watch TV. Didn't want to play with his Xbox. Didn't eat the cookie Mom gave him. He just sat, looking down into his lap.

"What's the matter, Jeff?" Mom asked.

"Nothing" said Jeff.

"Doesn't look like nothing," said Mom. "Did something happen at school?"

"Mm," said Jeff.

"Did someone pick on you? You can tell me."

"Richard and Aaron said I've got a funny one," said Jeff.

"A funny one?" said Mom, giving him a hug. "A funny what?"

"We were having a pee together, and they said my dick's funny, like an elephant's trunk." A tear formed in the corner of his eye.

"And theirs are round and red at the end?"

"Yeah. Richard said, 'What's the matter, aren't you circus-sized?' And Aaron said elephants should be in a circus!"

"Oh dear," said Mom. "They don't know anything. Now sit down and drink your milk and I'll tell you about it."

And this is Mom's story:

"When you were born, the doctor said, 'Do you want him circumcised?'" And we didn't know what it meant, so we found out as much as we could about it. 'Circumcised' means they cut the skin off the end of your penis and make that round thing inside show all the time. It's called the 'glans' or just the 'head'. People have been circumcising for a long time. Aaron's people have been doing it for thousands of years. They say God told them to. About a hundred and fifty years ago people started doing it in America because they thought penises were dirty. And some scientists thought having that skin - they call it the 'foreskin' - meant you might get all kinds of sickness. That's probably why they did it to Richard. But then other scientists found that was wrong. So now lots of people are fighting about it, but we decided, since it's your foreskin, it wasn't any of our business to go cutting it off you."

"Doesn't that hurt, cutting it off?" asked Jeff, his eyes wide.

"Yes, we asked about that too. They used to say it doesn't hurt, but now they know it does. It hurts a lot, and they have to give the babies injections with a needle first. That hurts them too, of course."

Just then Dad came home from work, and Mom told him: "Jeff's just found out he wasn't circumcised."

"Lucky Jeff!" said Dad, which surprised Jeff. "I was circumcised, and the more I hear about it, the more I wish I wasn't."

"Did it hurt?" said Jeff.

"I don't remember. Doesn't hurt now, in fact some people say you can feel more if you're not circumcised, and that would be good."

"What'll I say to Richard and Aaron?" asked Jeff.

"Don't say anything," said Mom. "It's not nice to hurt their feelings - the way they hurt yours. If they call you an elephant again, just say 'So give me a peanut.'"

"Give my penis a peanut!" said Jeff.

"That's my boy!" said Dad (who knew that was what Jeff most wanted to hear just then). "And remember, if *you're* different, *they're* different too. And *they're* different from Leonardo di Caprio. *He* wasn't circumcised."

"Leonardo? Wow! Anyone else?" asked Jeff.

"Lots of famous men weren't," said Dad. "Luke Perry, Macaulay Culkin, Will Smith. Most boys and men born outside the US have penises like yours: Ewan McGregor - you know, Obi Wan Kenobi in *Star Wars* - Ian McKellan - Gandalf - and just about all the famous European football stars and racing drivers."

"Gee, thanks Mom and Dad," said Jeff. "I'm sure glad you didn't have me 'circus-sized.'"



## Why is mine **different**?

Two good stories for children about conformity and difference are "The Sneetches" by Dr Seuss and "The Point" by Harry Nilsson.

Copies of this leaflet can be downloaded from <http://www.circumstitions.com/Docs/different.pdf>  
part of <http://www.circumstitions.com>  
where you can find much more information.

