

WHAT IS FGM/C?

FGM/C (Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting) is a practice that involves partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.¹

Depending on the region, FGM/C is recognized under different names including: khatna, gudniin, halalays, tahur, megrez, and khitan among others.



A VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

FGM/C is recognized internationally as a violation of human rights towards girls and women. It is an extreme form of gender-based violence and discrimination, reflecting deep-rooted inequality between the sexes. FGM/C can occur at any time, but as it is often performed on young girls between infancy and age 15 without consent, it is a violation of the rights of children.



A VIOLATION OF RIGHTS TO HEALTH

FGM/C has no health benefits. This practice violates a person's right to health and integrity, as well as the right to be free from cruel, degrading treatment. When the procedure results in death, it also violates a person's right to life.

THE HEALTH EFFECTS OF FGM/C:



IMMEDIATE COMPLICATIONS

Include: severe pain, excessive bleeding, genital tissue swelling, fever infections, injury to surrounding genital tissue, and sometimes death.



LONG-TERM COMPLICATIONS

Include: urinary infections, vaginal pain, infertility, painful menstrual cycles or sexual intercourse, excessive scar tissue, need for later surgeries, and psychological trauma.



EFFECTS ON PREGNANCY

Women affected by FGM/C are at risk for longer labor and caesarean section. They are also more likely to suffer complications and severe bleeding after birth, and higher instances of newborn deaths.

If you believe you or someone you know is at immediate risk of FGM/C, contact California's CPS agency at 1-800-540-4000 or call the Office of Women's Health Helpline at 1-800-994-9662.