

A girl at immediate risk of FGM may not know what's going to happen or the danger faced; she may make you aware of:

- A long holiday abroad or going 'home' to visit family
- Relative or cutter visiting from abroad
- A special occasion or ceremony to 'become a woman' or get ready for marriage
- A female relative being cut – a sister, cousin, or an older female relative such as a mother or aunt.

Signs you may notice:

- A family arranging a long break abroad during the summer holidays
- Unexpected, repeated or prolonged absence
- Academic work suffering

A young person may ask a teacher or another adult for help if she suspects FGM is going to happen or she may run away from home or miss sessions.

Reporting requirements

Regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales must report 'known' cases of FGM in under 18s to the police ([Home Office, 2016](#)).

Indicators FGM may have taken place:

A girl or woman who's had female genital mutilation (FGM) may:

- Have difficulty walking, standing or sitting
- Spend longer in the bathroom or toilet
- Appear withdrawn, anxious or depressed
- Have unusual behaviour after an absence from school or college
- Be particularly reluctant to undergo normal medical examinations
- Ask for help, but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.

The physical effects of FGM:

FGM can be extremely painful and dangerous. It can cause:

- Severe pain
- Shock
- Bleeding
- Infection such as tetanus, HIV and hepatitis B and C
- Organ damage
- Blood loss and infections that can cause death in some cases.

Long-term effects of FGM:

Girls and women who have had FGM may have problems that continue through adulthood, including:

- Difficulties urinating or incontinence
- Frequent or chronic vaginal, pelvic or urinary infections
- Menstrual problems
- Kidney damage and possible failure
- Cysts and abscesses
- Pain when having sex
- Infertility
- Complications during pregnancy and childbirth
- Emotional and mental health problems.

Find out more about effects on the [NHS Choices website](#).

If you think a child is in immediate danger, call:

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NSPCC on 0800 028 3550