

# A SAFE CUT!

## Clinics offer boys safe circumcision

By SAMANTHA KAMBULE

**E**VERY year during this time thousands of boys head to the mountains for circumcision.

While many boys make it back alive some aren't that lucky . . .

Zuzimpilo medical centre has recently added circumcision to help reduce the risk of HIV infection.

Because male circumcision partially protects men against catching HIV, the clinic now offers circumcision for men over the age of 16 years old – this includes pain control and a check-up visit.

Zanele Thusi from Devland in Joburg recently took her 17-year-old son, Steven, to the Zuzimpilo centre. She shared her experience with *SUNLIFE*.

“As a parent and a firm believer of circumcision, I decided to take my son to a clinic rather than let him go to the mountains. I was glad that they offered this service,” she said.

Zanele said the procedure cost her R400 which included pre-counselling for her son, an HIV and STI test, the operation, as well as medication and a follow-up visit.

Steven said he was ready for this.



Zanele Thusi says she is happy her son, Steven's circumcision went well.

*Photo by Jerry Mokgwankgwa*

“I am glad that I was offered counselling and checked for diseases beforehand. First I was scared but I felt at ease afterwards,” he said, adding that it was painfree.

Zanele said she had offered her son care during this time but it seems it wasn't needed.

“Steven has been fine and I am glad that this process is over,” she said.

Dimakatso Lebiba, programme director at the medical centre, said the circumcision was added as an HIV-fighting service this February.

“We have many bookings and all our past procedures have been successful,” she said.

Lebiba says they have done over 100 circumcisions at the clinic so far.

With the World Cup holidays, more schoolboys, are coming in to

be circumcised.

The centre has also increased distribution of condoms and safe-sex information during the soccer tournament.

“Clearly we support the ABCs of HIV prevention.

“Even with our anti-Aids messages people are still having risky sex when they drink alcohol,” said Dr Limakatso Lebina, Zuzimpilo's project director.

Dr Neil Martinson, the founder of Zuzimpilo, said: “Our condoms will be distributed at over 30 hotels across Joburg.

“Each room gets a complementary Sgidlava condom package from Zuzimpilo when it is made up.”

Zuzimpilo offers affordable, high quality healthcare for people with HIV who cannot pay current costs for private sector HIV and ARV care.