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**act:onaid**

# Female Genital Mutilation

**FACT** or **MYTH?**

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FACT

1. Female genital mutilation is the deliberate cutting of a girl's external genitals (private parts).

# FACT or MYTH?

FACT

2. In many countries it is carried out by women who have no medical training, using unsterilized knives, blades or sharpened stones, without anaesthetic (pain relief).

# FACT or MYTH?

FACT

3. Female genital mutilation is nearly always carried out on children, commonly between four and twelve years of age.

# FACT or MYTH?

**MYTH**

4. There are lots of health benefits to having female genital mutilation

**Girls are in danger of dying from blood loss or infection during and after the procedure**

# FACT or MYTH?

**MYTH**

5. Girls need to have female genital mutilation to have babies

**Women who have undergone female genital mutilation are likely to experience difficulty in childbirth**

# FACT or MYTH?

**MYTH**

6. Female genital mutilation is supported  
by religion

**Female genital mutilation is a 'traditional'  
practice and is linked to custom rather than  
religion**

# FACT or MYTH?

**MYTH**

7. Female genital mutilation is not a crime  
in the UK

**There is a maximum penalty of 14 years in  
prison for anyone found guilty of the  
offence. It is also illegal to take someone  
out of the UK for them to be cut.**



# FACT or MYTH?

FACT

8. Female genital mutilation is a form of child abuse

# FACT or MYTH?

FACT

9. Female genital mutilation is a violation of human rights

# FACT or MYTH?

**MYTH**

10. I can't do anything to stop FGM

**By speaking out and saying female genital mutilation is unacceptable, you add your voice to international pressure for the practice to end**

# Further information

ActionAid works with communities across Africa to end female genital mutilation. You can get more information, support and advice about female genital mutilation in the UK from:

[Childline](#)

[Daughters of Eve](#)

[Healthy Schools London](#)

[Foreign and Commonwealth Office](#)

[NHS](#)

[NSPCC](#)

The Metropolitan Police Service has a dedicated service for girls at risk of female genital mutilation. Call their Child Abuse Investigation Command/Project Azure on 020 7161 2888.