

How to Spot a Girl At Risk

The following may be signs that a girl may be at risk of FGM/C

- A girl is born to a woman who has undergone FGM/C or whose older sibling or cousin has undergone FGM/C;
- The family belongs to a community it's in which FGM/C is practiced AND have limited level of integration.
- The family indicates that there are strong levels of influence held by elders and/or elders are involved in bringing up female children;
- Where a girl from a practising community is withdrawn from sex education or physical education they may be at risk from their parents wishing to keep them uninformed about their body and their human rights.
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The following may be signs that a girl may be at imminent risk of FGM/C

- The family makes preparations for the child to take a holiday, e.g. arranging vaccinations, planning an absence from school; this may mean they are planning to take a girl for 'vacation cutting.'
- The child talks about a 'special procedure/ceremony' that is going to take place;
- If a female family elder is present, particularly when she is visiting from a country of origin, and taking a more active / influential role in the family;

Consider whether any other indicators exist that FGM may have or has already taken place, for example:

- The girl has changed in behaviour after a prolonged absence from school;
- The child has health problems, particularly bladder or menstrual problems;
- The child has difficulty walking, sitting or standing and may appear to be uncomfortable.
- The girl suddenly behaves differently; becomes anxious or withdrawn.
- Repeated failure to attend or engage with health and social services or the mother of a girl is very reluctant for her to undergo genital examination, including cervical smears;

What to do if you think a girl is at risk

- Engage the girl in conversation to assess the risk
- Engage the parents, without making assumptions; if warranted, explain FGM/C is illegal in Canada, as is taking the girl somewhere else to have it done
- Engage the children's society to consider next steps if it appears the threat of FGM?C is imminent
- Consider giving the girl information on how to contact Canadian High Commission/Embassy at her vacation destination



END FGM
CANADA NETWORK

END FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION/CUTTING

- If you suspect a girl is at immediate risk of FGM/C contact child protective services.
- FGM/C is a form of child abuse. If you suspect a girl is at risk of FGM/C you handle it the same way you would if you suspect the girl is in danger of physical, sexual or emotional abuse. Contact child protective services.

Check out the education module for more information on how to have these conversations