

Having a Vasectomy

What is a vasectomy?

A vasectomy is a procedure that makes a man sterile (this means he has no sperm in his semen and can't make a woman pregnant). The doctor cuts and removes part of the tube that carries sperm from the testicles to the semen. (This tube is called the "vas deferens.")

How is a vasectomy done?

A vasectomy takes 30 to 45 minutes. Before the operation starts, your doctor will give you a shot to numb your scrotum. Then your doctor will make one or two very small incisions in your scrotum. Through these small openings, your doctor will remove part of each sperm tube. The ends of the tubes that stay in your scrotum will be closed up.

Will I be sterile right away?

No. Sperm will still be in your tubes right after the surgery. It takes 8 to 10 weeks and 12 to 20 ejaculations before all the sperm are out of your semen. A semen test will show if there are sperm in your semen. You take this test about 2 months after the operation.

Is sterility permanent after vasectomy?

Once the test shows there are no sperm in your semen, you are sterile. However, in rare instances, the tubes grow back together, and sperm get into the semen again. Some studies state the occurrence is 1/750. While this is a very infrequent complication it is obviously an important possibility. For this reason we recommend getting a second semen test 12 months after the procedure. This second test not only insures the procedure was a success but also gives you and your partner peace of mind.

What if I change my mind?

Some men want the vasectomy reversed so they can father a child. But surgery to reconnect the tubes doesn't always work. You shouldn't have a vasectomy until you're sure you won't want to have children in the future.

Will I still have a normal sex life after a vasectomy?

Yes, your sex drive and your ability to have an erection and an ejaculation will not change after a vasectomy. In fact, some couples find that their sex life is better after a vasectomy because they don't worry about pregnancy.

What should I do before the surgery?

First, you and your partner should talk about the idea of a vasectomy and make the decision together. Your partner should be with you when you and your doctor talk about a vasectomy and on the day of your surgery.

Be sure to ask your doctor all the questions you have about the operation. Tell your doctor about anything that worries you. Your doctor will tell you what you need to do to get ready. Your doctor may give you a list of things to do. It's important for you to follow these directions.

Does a vasectomy hurt?

You may have a little pain during and after the operation. After the vasectomy, you should rest and put ice packs on your scrotum to help the pain. You should also wear an athletic supporter for a couple of days. You can take a mild pain medicine when you need it. You might have a little pain for a few days after the operation. You may also notice that your scrotum has some bruises and is a little swollen.

What activities can I do after the operation?

You'll need to stay home and rest for 1 or 2 days after your surgery. Then for the next 2 weeks, you can slowly become more active.

You may take a shower the day after your surgery. However, don't take tub baths or sit in water for about 1 week. This gives your incision time to heal.

You may have sex in 1 week, if you want to. Remember, though, that you won't be sterile until 8 to 10 weeks after the operation. So keep using birth control until you have the test to check for sperm in your semen.

Does a vasectomy cause any problems?

Sometimes there are small problems, but not very often. The incision might get infected or bleed. Signs of an infection include swelling that lasts more than 1 or 2 days, redness and increasing pain. See your doctor if you have any of these symptoms. If you have an infection, you may need to take an antibiotic. If your incision starts to bleed, your doctor may need to do a small surgery to stop the bleeding.

Some men get a lump in their scrotum many weeks after the vasectomy. The lump usually goes away on its own. If the lump hurts or doesn't go away in about 6 weeks, call your doctor. Pain may develop, caused by a condition called "congestive epididymitis". It usually goes away on its own. Aspirin or acetaminophen (brand name: Tylenol) may help.

Vasectomy Questionnaire

After you have read the vasectomy fact sheet, please answer the following questions. It is simply to confirm that you understand the procedure. If you answer some of the questions incorrectly, the counselor or the doctor will discuss them with you.

Please circle the correct answer. Correct answers to these questions confirm that you understand the basic facts about vasectomy.

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| 1. Vasectomy keeps the sperm from getting into the semen. | F | T |
| 2. Most vasectomies are done using local anesthetic. | F | T |
| 3. After vasectomy, men are still fertile for some time. | F | T |
| 4. After vasectomy, the amount of fluid ejaculated is about the same as before the procedure. | F | T |
| 5. A complication can occasionally occur after a vasectomy | F | T |
| 6. Vasectomy is very different from castration. | F | T |
| 7. Vasectomy should be considered permanent. | F | T |

Signature

Date