



Vasectomy

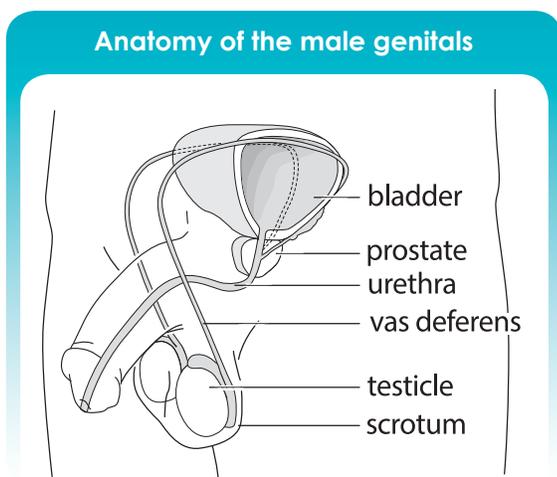
A vasectomy is low-risk surgery for permanent birth control.

What is a vasectomy?

- If you are looking for a way to have permanent birth-control (contraception), think about having a vasectomy.
- It is a minor surgery.
- You will be an outpatient and have only a local anesthetic.

What happens with a vasectomy?

- The **vas deferens** is a long tube on each side of the scrotum (the "sac") coming from the testicles to the urethra. (See diagram *Anatomy of the male genitals*)



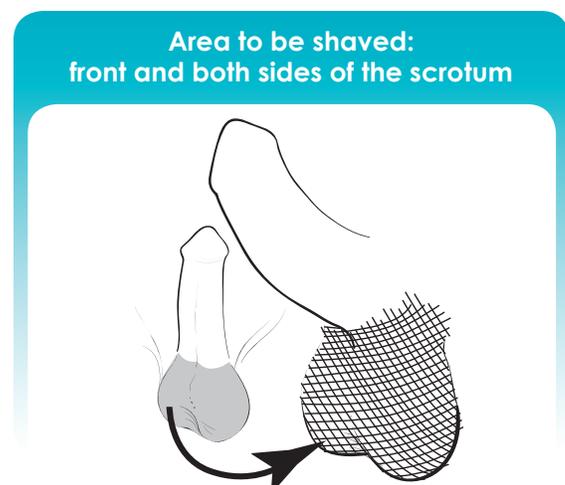
- Each tube usually carries sperm that flow out with the semen during ejaculation.
- In a vasectomy, the **vas deferens** is cut in two and the ends are tied off.
- When ejaculation happens, there will no longer be any sperm to fertilize the egg produced by the woman.
- Without sperm, no pregnancy is possible.

Can I change my mind and undo the vasectomy?

- A vasectomy is supposed to be a permanent type of birth control.
- It is important that you are sure that you don't want to have children before having a vasectomy.
- Although it may be possible to reconnect the vas deferens later on (called **reversal**), getting a partner pregnant may be more difficult.
- Fathering a child after a reversal is based on the quality of the sperm and how the vas has healed.

What do I need to know about the surgery?

- You can have this surgery in your urologist's office or at the hospital.
- Before your appointment, your urologist will let you know if you have to shave the hair from the front part of your scrotum. (See diagram *Area to be shaved: front and both sides of the scrotum*)

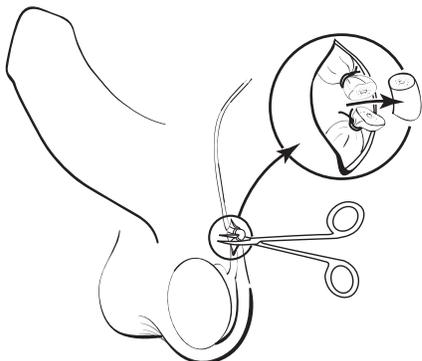


- Bring snug-fitting underwear or a support for the scrotum with you to the surgery.
- They will help to keep you more comfortable after the surgery.

What happens during a vasectomy?

- On the day of your vasectomy, you will be put on an examination table in a treatment room.
- Your scrotal skin will be cleaned with an antiseptic.
- You will then be covered with a germ-free sheet to decrease the risk of infection.
- Usually, the skin and vas are “frozen” with an anesthetic using a fine needle (called a local anesthetic).
- This blocks the pain, although you may still feel some pressure and pulling.
- Your doctor will make a small opening in the scrotal skin over the vas.
- Each vas is then cut and sealed off with clips or dissolving stitches (which don't have to be taken out). (See diagram *Each vas is exposed through a small incision and divided*)
- There should be little bleeding.
- The surgery usually takes about 20 minutes.
- If there is a small bandage on your incision, you may take it off the day after surgery.
- Any stitches in the skin should fall off within a few weeks when the openings have fully healed.

Each vas is exposed through a small incision and divided



What do I need to do when I get home after my vasectomy?

- “Freezing” from your local anesthetic usually wears off a few hours after your surgery.
- You may need someone to drive you home after your vasectomy.
- You may bathe or shower after 24 hours.
- For the first two or three days after your surgery plan to do only light work around the house.
- You may start exercising when you feel comfortable, usually after a week.
- For about one week, avoid heavy lifting, vigorous or strenuous physical activity or exercise.
- Any strain can cause bleeding and make the swelling of the scrotum worse.

What can I do if I have pain?

- Usually there is only mild pain after surgery but it may last a few days.
- Acetaminophen (such as Tylenol™) or ibuprofen (such as Advil™) are usually enough for any mild pain.
- Use any pain medications your doctor has prescribed for you if the pain is stronger.
- It is common for the scrotum to swell and look bruised after a vasectomy.
- Use an ice pack (a bag of peas also works) on the scrotum to shrink the swelling.
- It is important **not to put ice directly** on the scrotum but wrap it in a thin towel as frostbite can happen in minutes.
- The snug underwear or a scrotal support that you wear may have a pouch in it for an ice pack.
- Use the ice pack for no more than 20 minutes each time.
- Ice the scrotum three or four times a day.

When can I go back to having sex?

- After one week, you may return to having sex.
- You should not see any change in the amount of semen you ejaculate nor your ability to have sex.

- You will still be fertile for several months after your vasectomy.
- There will be some sperm still in the tubes and glands.
- At about 8-12 weeks, your doctor will do a lab check on one or two of your samples (collected by masturbation).
- When your semen is free of sperm, your doctor will let you know.
- Until then, you **must** use another kind of birth control.
- It is rare for you to need another vasectomy to be sure of birth control.

Bottom Line

- If you and your partner are looking for permanent birth control, a vasectomy is nearly 100% effective.
- There are usually few problems with a vasectomy.

Your vasectomy appointment has been scheduled for:

Day: _____

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Notes: _____

What else do I need to know about the vasectomy?

- There is a small risk of infection that might need antibiotics.
- Often, there might be a small lump in each vas at the site of cut.
- Sometimes you might have pain or ache in your scrotum that may last for a few weeks or months.
- This pain usually goes away without any special treatment, however 1 out of every 10 men undergoing vasectomy may experience long term discomfort in the scrotum.
- It doesn't happen very often, but the ends of the vas may re-join and heal together.
 - If they re-join, sperm may still be in the semen
 - That means you can still get your partner pregnant.
 - In this case, you will need a repeat vasectomy.
- There is no reason to believe that having a vasectomy can cause other health problems.

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