

# Bitesize Guide to:

## Vasectomy

### What is it?

A vasectomy is otherwise known as male sterilisation. The tubes that carry sperm (vas deferens) are sealed in order to prevent fertilisation occurring when a male sperm meets a female egg. When a man ejaculates, there will be no sperm in his semen, so he will be unable to make a woman pregnant.

### Will sex be affected?

The procedure has no effect on sex drive as this relies on testosterone, the production of which is unchanged. The volume of fluid ejaculated does not change significantly, as sperm only makes up 5% of semen. The remaining 95% of semen is made from seminal fluid.

### Who has it?

A vasectomy is a form of surgical contraception, therefore men who wish to have no further children undergo the procedure to prevent unwanted or accidental pregnancies in a woman. It is more than 99% effective.

### What happens during the operation?

The procedure may be performed in two different ways, in either case it is typically done as a day case operation so it is unlikely you will need to stay in hospital overnight. The scrotum will be numbed beforehand using a local anaesthetic medication.

The conventional method uses a scalpel to make two small cuts in the scrotum to access the tubes that carry sperm. A small length of the tube is then cut and removed, before sealing each end. The small cuts made will then be stitched together.

The procedure may also be done without the use of scalpels, where the scrotum is punctured to access the tubes. The tubes are sealed in a similar fashion to the conventional method but no stitches are required.

### How can I prepare before the operation?

A vasectomy is typically an outpatient procedure, so it is advised that, if possible, you arrange for someone to take you home afterwards. It is also recommended that you shave the area beforehand, and bring tight fitting underwear with you to wear following the operation.

## What happens after the operation?

It can be expected that you will be in mild discomfort for 1-2 days following the procedure, this can normally be managed with over-the-counter simple painkillers and rest is recommended for 48 hours. There may be some bruising and swelling which can be helped by wearing tight fitting underwear. Some people also find blood in their semen for the next few ejaculations.

## How soon after the operation can I have sex?

It is normally advised you can have sex as soon as is comfortable for you, however you will need to use another form of contraception for up to 12 weeks after the procedure. In order to rely on the vasectomy as a reliable form of contraception, you will need to have provided two samples of semen that have been tested to ensure there is no sperm content.

## What are the risks of the operation?

There are some possible complications of the procedure you doctor will make you aware of:

- Collection of blood inside the scrotum, known as a haematoma
- Infection
- Sperm granulomas (sperm leakage from the tubes)
- Long term testicular pain
- Re-connection of the tubes (rare)

## Can it be reversed?

It is possible, but can often be unsuccessful. The longer the time period since the procedure, the lower the success rate. You should only have the procedure if you are certain you do not want any children in the future as it is considered permanent.

If you are interested in a vasectomy, or would like more information, book an appointment with your GP or ask in your local contraception clinic.

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The Urology Foundation  
1-2 St Andrew's Hill  
London  
EC4V 5BY

Registered charity 1128683