

Vasectomy Information Sheet

What is a vasectomy?

A vasectomy is a form of permanent birth control. Sperm leave the testicle through a tube called the vas deferens. During vasectomy, each vas deferens is intentionally blocked.

Am I a good candidate for vasectomy?

Vasectomy is an excellent birth control choice for a man who is psychologically comfortable having the procedure. You should be certain that you do not want to have more biologic children. Vasectomy reversal is possible, but vasectomy reversal is expensive, is not covered by Medicare, and is not always successful. **Do not have a vasectomy planning to have a vasectomy reversal.** Your urologist needs to be able to feel each vas deferens to perform vasectomy. If they cannot, you may not be a candidate.

What kind of vasectomy will I have? What about laser vasectomy?

You will have a “no scalpel” vasectomy. The vasectomy is performed through one (rarely two) small opening in the skin on the front of your scrotum. You will probably not have stitches, but if you do, they will dissolve and fall out within a week. Laser vasectomy sounds cool, but it does not exist.

Is vasectomy ALWAYS successful?

No form of birth control is 100% successful. The failure rate of vasectomy is approximately 1 in 1500. For perspective, condoms fail at least 5 % of the time.

Does vasectomy work immediately?

NO!!! You are not sterile (“shooting blanks”) immediately after your vasectomy. You should continue to use birth control until you have a semen analysis three months after your vasectomy. To perform a semen analysis, you masturbate into a collection cup that will be provided to you, typically early in the morning. You will then deliver the cup to the hospital. Your urologist will call you to confirm that your vasectomy has been successful. If your vasectomy did not work, you want to find out this way, not by a surprise pregnancy! **Get your test done!**

Does vasectomy prevent sexually transmitted infections?

No. Use condoms to prevent sexually transmitted infections

Will vasectomy change my erections, orgasm, or ejaculation? What about testosterone?

A vasectomy will not cause erectile dysfunction. The blood vessels and nerves that cause an erection do not come from your scrotum. If you have “buyer’s regret” or were uncomfortable mentally having a vasectomy, you could experience sexual side effects. **Be certain you are comfortable having a vasectomy before the procedure.**

Your testicles make sperm. Most of the fluid that comes out when you ejaculate is made by your prostate and organs called the seminal vesicles. You will not notice a difference when you ejaculate or your orgasm.

Your testosterone levels will not change.

How do I prepare for my vasectomy?

Unless you are told otherwise, your vasectomy will be performed using freezing. Eat a light breakfast. Before you arrive, shave the hair at the base of your penis where it joins your scrotum, as well as the hair on the front of your scrotum. If you usually keep your pubic hair bushy, trim it back to expose the front of your scrotum.

What about the recovery period?

If you can, take two days to relax after your vasectomy. A small amount of bruising is normal. Avoid lifting, pulling, straining, or strenuous activity. Go for walks. Laying around on the couch for the entire recovery is not recommended, as not moving for long periods can lead to blood clots in your legs. If you find it helps, apply an ice pack wrapped in a towel to your scrotum for no more than 15-20 minutes per hour. Do not fall asleep with ice on your scrotum! You can shower gently whenever you want. You can usually return to work after two days. Exercise and sex can resume a week after your vasectomy. If something causes pain, stop doing it, and wait a few more days before you try it again. Ask your doctor if you need clarification.

Prescription pain killers are not required. Take acetaminophen (Tylenol) 975-1000 mg and ibuprofen (Advil) 400 mg together every six hours for 2 days, then as required. If you are allergic to either of these medications, do not take them.

What are the complications of vasectomy?

Potential complications of vasectomy include: infection, bleeding/hematoma, a small bump where the vasectomy was performed called a sperm granuloma, and constant testicular pain (chronic pain is <1%). Vasectomy does not lead to prostate cancer. It will not change your urination (how you “pee”).