



# Vasectomy

Urological health

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Vasectomy Video

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

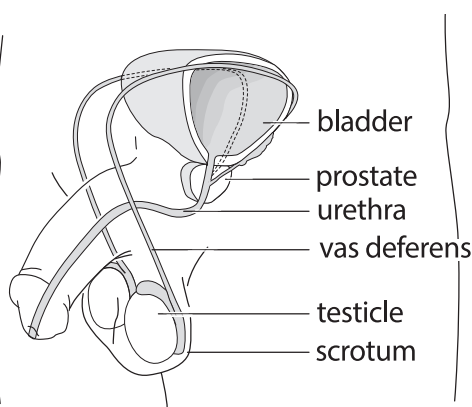
## What is a vasectomy?

- 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*)

**Anatomy of the male genitals**



- During ejaculation, sperm usually flows out with the semen through the vas deferens.
- In a vasectomy, the vas deferens is cut in two and the ends are tied off.
- After a vasectomy, there will no longer be any sperm during ejaculation to fertilize the egg produced by the woman.
- Without sperm, no pregnancy is possible.

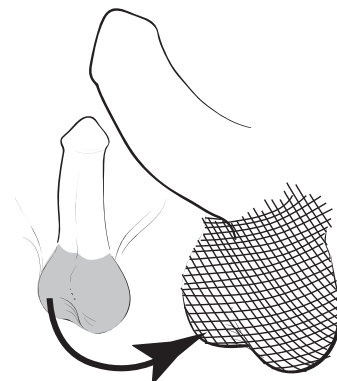
## Can I change my mind and undo the vasectomy?

- A vasectomy is supposed to be a permanent type of birth control.
- It is important to be 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 (this is called reversal), it may be more difficult to get a partner pregnant.
- The chances of fathering a child after reversal depend on the quality of the sperm and how the vas deferens 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 whether you need to shave the hair from the front part of your scrotum. (See diagram: *Area to be shaved: Front and both sides of the scrotum*)

**Area to be shaved:  
front and both sides of the scrotum**



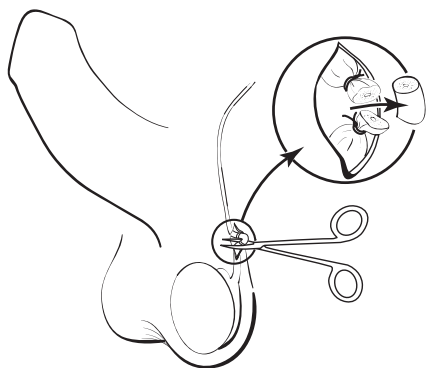
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- Bring snug-fitting underwear or a support for the scrotum with you to the surgery.
- They will help to keep you more comfortable after the surgery.

## 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 deferens are “frozen” with an anesthetic using a fine needle (local anesthetic).
- This blocks the pain. You may still feel some pressure and pulling.
- Your doctor will make a small opening in the scrotal skin over the vas deferens.
- Each vas deferens is then cut and sealed off with clips or dissolving stitches (which don't have to be taken out). (See diagram: *Each vas deferens is exposed through a small incision and divided*)
- There should be minimal bleeding.
- The surgery usually takes about 20 minutes.
- If there is a small bandage on your incision, it can be removed 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?

- You may need someone to drive you home after your vasectomy.
- “Freezing” from your local anesthetic usually wears off a few hours after the surgery.
- 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 one 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?

- Pain after surgery is usually mild, but may last a few days.
- Acetaminophen (such as Tylenol™) or ibuprofen (such as Advil™) are usually enough to relieve mild pain.
- If the pain is stronger, use any pain medications your doctor has prescribed.
- It is common for the scrotum to swell and look bruised after a vasectomy.
- Use an ice pack (a frozen bag of peas also works) on the scrotum to shrink the swelling.
- It is important not to put ice directly on the scrotum, as frostbite can happen in minutes. Wrap the ice in a thin towel.
- 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 your ability to have sex or the amount of semen you ejaculate.

- You will still be fertile for several months after your vasectomy.
- During this time, some sperm will remain 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.
- In rare cases, another vasectomy is necessary to be sure of birth control.

## 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 deferens at the site of the cut.
- You may 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, one 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 deferens may rejoin and heal together.
  - If they rejoin, 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.
- Vasectomy is not known to cause other health problems.

## What's the bottom line?

- Vasectomy is a minor, low-risk surgery.
- If you and your partner are looking for permanent birth control, a vasectomy is nearly 100% effective.

## Your vasectomy appointment has been scheduled for:

Day: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

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Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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