

## Vasectomy

### What is vasectomy?

Vasectomy is a form of birth control for a man. During minor surgery, the doctor removes or closes off a small portion of the tubes (called *Vas deferens*) that carry sperm. When the Vas is blocked, sperm cannot enter the semen. You will still be able to make semen and ejaculate as before.

Vasectomy makes a man sterile. However, you will not be sterile right away after the surgery. You will need to have sperm counts taken for 6 to 8 weeks. You must continue your present form of birth control until your doctor says otherwise.

Vasectomy can be done in a doctor's office or in a hospital outpatient setting. It takes about 20 to 30 minutes, and there is little discomfort. Your doctor may ask you to shave your scrotum and groin area before coming to the hospital. If you haven't been asked to do this, it will be done in the hospital.

### How the vasectomy is done

You will lie on your back. The doctor or assistant will wash your scrotum and groin area with an iodine soap to help prevent infection. To numb the scrotum, your doctor will inject a medicine like lidocaine. You may feel a slight burning until the skin becomes numb (5 to 10 seconds).

Usually one incision is made down the center of the scrotum. Your doctor will use small staple-like clips crimped over the ends of the Vas cords to prevent them from healing together. Cautery can also be used on the ends of the Vas cords to create scar tissue. This prevents the cords from healing back together.

As your doctor works with the Vas cords, you may feel a mild pulling in the groin or lower abdomen. If you are uncomfortable, please ask for more medicine. To close the incisions, 2 or 3 stitches will be placed. Usually the stitches dissolve by themselves in 5 to 10 days.

### Home instructions

- Keep the incisions covered with a gauze pad. Wear an athletic supporter or snug jockey shorts to keep the pads in place for 5 to 7 days after the procedure.
- Take Tylenol (regular or extra strength) for discomfort, once the local anesthetic wears off (about 1 to 2 hours). Ask your doctor before taking any product containing ibuprofen. **Avoid aspirin products for 5 to 7 days**, as they can increase the chance of bleeding.
- To decrease swelling and discomfort, fill 2 small plastic bags with 2 to 3 ice cubes and lay one bag on each side of the scrotum over the dressing. Apply for 30 to 40 minutes, 5 to 6 times during the day. **Both your testicles may swell** and will gradually return to normal.
- You may take quick showers beginning the next day. To prevent infection, avoid tub baths, swimming, whirlpools and hot tubs for 5 to 7 days after the procedure.
- Stay off your feet for the rest of the day. Avoid heavy work for several days. This includes snow shoveling, weight lifting, jogging or mowing the lawn. Avoid long periods of standing or walking (more than 10 to 15 minutes). Avoid lifting more than 10 to 20 pounds for several days.
- If your job involves light work such as a desk job, you may return to work the next day.
- Your doctor will tell you when you may resume sexual intercourse. Wait at least one week, and continue your present form of birth control.
- If your stitches need to be removed, your doctor will see you in the office 5 to 10 days later.

**Call your doctor if:**

- You have pain that gets worse after 24 to 36 hours, and becomes throbbing pain.
- You notice increased swelling or puffiness in the area of the incision.
- The area around the incision is hot to touch.
- You have a fever.
- You see thick yellow drainage around the incision.
- You see a lot of pink or red drainage around the incision.

**Sperm counts**

Remember that you will not be sterile until a sperm count is done 6 to 8 weeks after the vasectomy. During these weeks, 15 to 25 ejaculations are needed to clear out any remaining sperm. The sample should be brought to the lab within one hour of collection in the container given to you. Do not stop your present form of birth control until your doctor tells you that your specimen is sterile. If you have questions, please ask your nurse or doctor.