

UROLOGY SPECIALISTS, P.A.

Stuart Zykorie, M.D.
Board Certified Urologist

Howard R. Lippman, M.D.
Board Certified Urologist

Don L. Berardinucci, M.D.
Board Certified Urologist

ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT VASECTOMY

WHAT IS A VASECTOMY?

A vasectomy is a surgical procedure that renders a man sterile by making it impossible for the sperm to become part of the seminal fluid.

During intercourse, sperm cells travel from the testicles through the vasa deferentia, and join the seminal fluid produced by the seminal vesicles and the prostate gland, and are then ejaculated through the penis. When the surgeon performs a vasectomy, he cuts through the vas deferens extending from each testicle, and removes a small segment and ties off both remaining ends. Since conception cannot take place in the absence of sperm, this procedure results in sterilization.

WILL I BE STERILE AS SOON AS THE OPERATION IS OVER?

NO. Don't count on being sterile immediately after the procedure. There may be some sperm residing above the area where the vas deferens was cut. You will still be fertile until all those sperm cells have been ejaculated. In fact, it generally takes about 20 ejaculations following vasectomy for the sperm to disappear. The doctor may ask that you provide a sample of seminal fluid to the lab about 10 to 12 weeks after surgery for analysis under a microscope to be sure that no sperm are present. Only after this has been confirmed can you be positive that the surgery has been a success.

IS THE STERILIZATION PERMANENT?

For all intents and purposes, yes. The chances of the two cut ends somehow reconnecting spontaneously are extremely rare; probably no more than 1 in 10,000 cases. It is therefore a good idea to be sure about your decision before going ahead with the surgery.

WHAT IF I CHANGE MY MIND?

Vasectomy reversal is possible, and is accomplished by rejoining the two ends of the vas deferens. Once this is done, you *may possibly* be fertile again. However, you should know that statistically, fertility is restored in fewer than 50 percent of the patients on whom vasectomy is performed. You should consider the surgery to be permanent.

HOW WILL THE PROCEDURE AFFECT MY SEX LIFE?

Although the vasectomy will make you sterile, it will not have any other effect on your ability to have sexual intercourse. In fact, many couples find that once the worry about an unwanted pregnancy is behind them, their sex life improves.

WILL I STILL EJACULATE IN THE NORMAL MANNER?

Yes. Most of the seminal fluid which is ejaculated during intercourse is produced by the seminal vesicles and the prostate gland. The sperm itself makes up only 2 percent of the ejaculate, so the vasectomy will only reduce the amount of fluid ejaculated, and this is barely noticeable.

WHERE IS THE PROCEDURE PERFORMED?

Most patients have their vasectomy performed in our office, where we have all the proper equipment and make every effort to assure your maximum comfort. If needed, however, we can arrange to perform your surgery under general anesthesia at an outpatient surgical center.

IS VASECTOMY PAINFUL?

As with any operation, no matter how minor, there will be some discomfort associated with it. Local anesthesia will be administered during the procedure.

ARE THERE ANY COMPLICATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH A VASECTOMY?

Any problems that might occur after the operation are usually quite minor. There may be some pain and tenderness in the area where the surgery was performed, and there may be some swelling and bruising. Your physician will probably prescribe some medication to keep the discomfort to a minimum.

As with any surgery, there is always the possibility of infection. This is not common after vasectomy, however. In a very small percentage of cases, a blood vessel inside the scrotum continues to bleed after the operation, which will cause the scrotum to swell significantly. If this happens, contact your physician at once.

ARE THERE ANY LONG-TERM COMPLICATIONS?

As far as medical research can determine, there are no long-term complications associated with vasectomy. Aside from the desired sterilization, the only other known effect of the operation is the small scrotal scar where the incision is made.

HOW SOON AFTER THE OPERATION CAN I HAVE SEXUAL INTERCOURSE?

You may resume your normal sexual activity, in most cases, 10 days after surgery. Keep in mind, however, that you may not be sterile until some time after the operation, and that you should therefore continue to use some form of birth control until your doctor confirms that all sperm have disappeared from your semen.

IS THERE ANYTHING SPECIAL I SHOULD DO BEFORE THE SURGERY?

Your doctor will give you specific instructions when he discusses the procedure with you. You may be asked to purchase an athletic supporter for use after the operation. Although it is not essential, he may suggest that you have someone accompany you, so that you can be driven home after the surgery.

WHAT ABOUT AFTER THE SURGERY?

This is up to your physician. You may be asked to wear an athletic supporter for the first week after the operation. Do not engage in any strenuous physical activity for the first 10 days, and work your way back to your normal routine. When showering the day after the surgery, be careful to wash the scrotal area carefully. The stitches used to close the incision will dissolve. There may be a slight discharge from the incision site, but this should not be a concern. Simply place a small piece of sterile gauze pad over the area as needed.

FOLLOW ALL INSTRUCTIONS COMPLETELY. ASK YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU HAVE ANY ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS.