

Vasectomy Information

What is a vasectomy?

A vasectomy is a surgical procedure that renders a man sterile. This literature is designed to give you a better understanding of the procedure and what to expect after it is performed.

To begin with, you should have some basic knowledge of the anatomy and physiology of the male reproductive system. During intercourse, sperm cells travel from the testicles through the vas deferens, become part of the seminal fluid (from the seminal vesicles and prostate gland), and are ejaculated through the penis. When a vasectomy is performed, the surgeon cuts a small segment from each vas deferens and clips off the two remaining ends. The object of this procedure is to make it impossible for the sperm to become part of the seminal fluid. Since conception cannot take place in the absence of sperm, a vasectomy results in permanent male sterilization.

Will I be sterile as soon as the operation is over?

NO! *Contrary to what many people believe, you may not be sterile immediately after the operation.* This is because there are some sperm residing in the area where the vas deferens was cut during the procedure. Until all of these sperm cells have been ejaculated, you will be fertile. In general, it takes between 10 and 12 ejaculations following the vasectomy for the sperm to disappear. *To make sure you are infertile, we require that you perform a semen analysis 3 months after the vasectomy to confirm that no sperm are present in the ejaculate. **Until you have this done, you should not consider yourself infertile.*** Call the office once you've had the test, and we'll review the results with you.

Suppose I change my mind later on, can the operation be reversed?

You should consider this operation permanent. The two ends of the vas deferens can be surgically reconnected; however, fertility may only be restored in approximately 50% of the patients who have their vasectomy reversed.

How will the procedure affect my sex life?

Although the vasectomy will make you sterile, it will have no effect on your ability to have sexual intercourse. In fact, some couples may find that their sex life improves after the vasectomy because they no longer have to worry about the surprise of an unwanted pregnancy.

Will I still ejaculate in a normal manner?

Yes. Most of the fluid in the ejaculate is produced by the seminal vesicles and the prostate gland. Only 2% of the ejaculate fluid consists of sperm. Therefore, after a vasectomy, ejaculation will take place in the same way it did before the procedure.

Are there any complications associated with a vasectomy?

The problems that may occur after the operation are usually quite minor. There will certainly be some discomfort, bruising, and swelling. This usually is most pronounced in the first 48 to 72 hours following the vasectomy, but it may continue for several weeks. As with any surgery, the possibility of infection is always present, but this is a very rare occurrence. Approximately one in every two thousand patients (0.05%) will have pain that persists for some time following the procedure.

Where does the procedure take place?

The procedure is performed in the office of Washington Urology located at the above address. Alternatively, the procedure can be performed with intravenous sedation in the Virginia Hospital Center surgery suite located at 1701 N. George Mason Drive, Arlington, Virginia.

How long does the procedure take?

The vasectomy takes approximately 15 to 20 minutes to perform. You will need someone to pick you up after the procedure.

When can I resume activity?

You will be discharged home with a prescription for narcotic pain medication. You can use it if you need it, though many patients seem to do well with aspirin, Tylenol or Motrin. Take it easy for the first day or two. Many patients find it helpful to use an ice pack to the groin area for the first 24 hours, and an athletic supporter or support-style underwear may also provide comfort and decrease swelling. Once the swelling and discomfort resolve you can resume normal activity, though it is recommended that you refrain from any exercise for about two weeks. You can return to work as soon as you feel ready (usually about 48 to 72 hours after the procedure). It is OK to resume sexual intercourse within a few days. Please keep in mind that you are not yet infertile until we have confirmed that there are no sperm in your ejaculate.



What about bathing?

The sutures that are used will dissolve on their own or fall out after a week or two. You may resume showering 24 hours after the procedure.

Post surgery follow-up

No follow-up visit is required. If you are experiencing anything of concern, please call the office. If needed, you will be seen on the day of your call. Critical to your follow-up are two semen analyses at month 3 and 4 after your vasectomy. Information about where this can be done will be provided on the day of your vasectomy.

What if I have questions or concerns?

You can always reach the urologist on call by contacting Washington Urology at 703.717.4200.