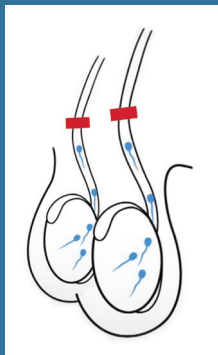


# FACT SHEET: VASECTOMY

Remember, a vasectomy **does not protect you from Sexually Transmitted Infections or HIV**. If you are looking for protection from STIs and HIV, both the internal and external condom are great options.



## HOW DOES A VASECTOMY WORK?

- Vasectomy is a simple, safe form of permanent birth control. It is an office-based procedure that takes 10-15 minutes to complete.
- Vasectomy works by blocking the tubes (vas deferens) that carry sperm from the testes. This prevents sperm from entering the semen. If there is no sperm in the semen, you cannot get someone pregnant.
- No method of birth control is 100% effective. Vasectomies are almost 100% effective in preventing pregnancy.

## HOW IS A VASECTOMY DONE?

- A clinician performs the vasectomy procedure in the office.
- During a vasectomy, your clinician will reach the vas tubes through a single, small skin opening in the scrotum. The clinician will divide and seal each tube using heat (cauterization) and a tiny clip or tie. This prevents the sperm from moving through the tubes.

## DOES IT HURT?

- You will have little or no pain during the vasectomy. The clinician uses a spray applicator or very fine needle (the size of a hair) for local anesthesia. This numbs the skin and area around the tubes. General anesthesia is not needed.
- The vasectomy site does **NOT** touch the testes or penis.

## HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

- It usually takes about 10-15 minutes.
- The procedure may take longer depending on your anatomy, and if you have a history of significant trauma to the area of the procedure.

## WHEN DOES THE VASECTOMY START WORKING?

- Vasectomy is **highly effective** (it fails in less than 1 in 2,000 people). But it can take up to 3 months to start working.
- Your semen must be checked after vasectomy to make sure there is no more sperm in it. Until then, use a different birth control method, like condoms, to prevent pregnancy.
- Most people do not have sperm in their semen the first time it is tested. Sometimes it takes more than one test before the semen is clear of sperm.

## IS VASECTOMY PERMANENT?

- Yes, vasectomy is permanent. After vasectomy, you can no longer get a person pregnant. If you may want children someday, vasectomy is not a good choice.
- A surgical procedure does exist to reverse vasectomy. But, this operation (called “vasovasostomy”) costs a lot and does not always work. On average, only half of those that try getting pregnant after their partner has a reversal do get pregnant.
- If you have had a vasectomy and want to have children, talk to your clinician about In Vitro Fertilization (IVF).

## WHAT SHOULD I DO AFTER THE VASECTOMY PROCEDURE?

- Relax with your feet up on the day of your vasectomy. If you choose, you can return to work or light activity the following day.
- There may be some soreness for a night or two after the procedure. A cold compress and/or pain pills can help. Wear tight underwear or a jock strap for the first few days after the vasectomy to decrease pain with movement and bleeding.
- Avoid any vigorous activity, including sports and sex, for the first 3-7 days after your vasectomy.

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN “NO-SCALPEL” AND CLASSIC VASECTOMY?

- No-scalpel vasectomy does not use a scalpel. It uses special small tools to reach the vas tubes by making one small opening in the scrotum without cutting. Because this opening is so small, stitches are not needed.
- The chance of complications (infection and bleeding) is lower with the no-scalpel technique. Recovery is also faster.

# FACT SHEET: VASECTOMY

## IS VASECTOMY SAFE?

- Vasectomy is a very safe, low-risk procedure.
- Mild bruising is the most common reaction. Wear tight underwear or a jock strap for the first few days after the vasectomy to lower your chances of bleeding.
- Several weeks after the procedure some people have pain in the testes that lasts a few days. You can take ibuprofen or naproxen for the pain.
- There is a very rare chance that the tubes can grow back together after a vasectomy.
- Serious problems are rare. If you have the following symptoms, see your clinician:
  - Infection
  - A painful bump on the vas (sperm granuloma)
  - Bleeding
  - Pain that does not get better after taking pain medication

## HOW WILL HAVING A VASECTOMY AFFECT ME?

- Most people have no change in sex drive. Some people note an increased sex drive after vasectomy.
- Vasectomy does not affect hormones. After vasectomy, sexual function does not change. Sensation, erection, and ejaculation are the same except the semen no longer contains sperm.
- You will **not** notice a change the amount of semen. Most semen is made in glands above the tubes. The amount of sperm in semen is so small that people cannot notice any change. After a vasectomy, the only way to tell the difference in semen is with a microscopic analysis.
- Vasectomy does not affect ejaculation. You will not notice a difference in your semen or ejaculate.
- Long-term pain is very rare.

## WHAT HAPPENS TO THE SPERM AFTER A VASECTOMY?

- Your body reabsorbs the sperm cells.

## WHY DO I HAVE TO WAIT 3 MONTHS TO GET MY SEMEN CHECKED?

- You are not “clear” until a semen check shows that your semen no longer contains sperm.
- The semen check is an important part of vasectomy, but bringing the sample in too soon can give an inaccurate result. Waiting allows the hidden sperm to be flushed out.
- You can collect the sample at home.
- There is a very rare chance that the tubes can grow back together after a vasectomy. After three months, the semen analysis should show if this happened.
- For most people, the semen check is a simple, last step in the process.