



**BETTER
HEALTH**
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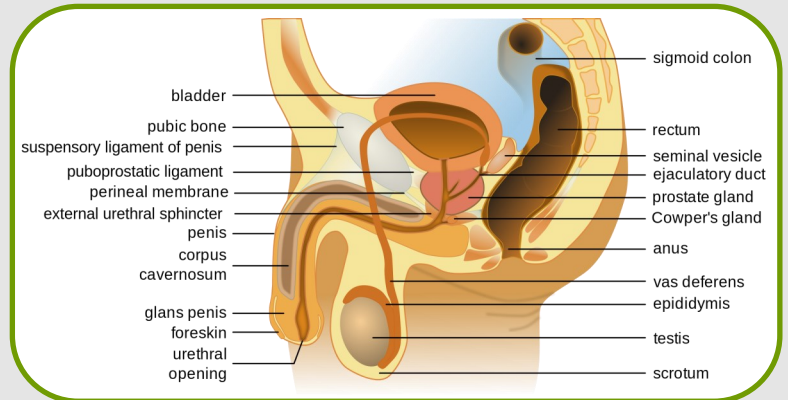
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Vasectomy Information Sheet

What is Vasectomy?

Vasectomy is the surgical sterilization of the male, an operation that prevents sperm travelling out of the testes (balls) and into the semen. If there are no sperm in your semen, you cannot make a woman pregnant. The operation does not involve removing the testicles and will not affect your ability to produce sperm. It will not change your sexual ability or male characteristics. You will still be able to have and enjoy sex and when you ejaculate, it will feel the same. The only difference will be that your semen will not contain sperm.



What does it mean to have a vasectomy?

Vasectomy is a permanent form of contraception. You cannot stop using it if you change your mind. Reversal of vasectomy is possible but a successful pregnancy after reversal cannot be guaranteed.

How is the operation conducted?

Vasectomy is a simple and straightforward operation. The surgeon makes two small openings in the front of the scrotum, picks up the vas deferens (the tube that carries the sperm) on each side in turn and cuts and seals the ends of the divided vas. A small portion of each vas is removed. The openings made are then sutured to close them. The operation takes about 20 minutes and is carried out under local anaesthetic.

What should I expect?

Even though the operation takes a short time, you will be asked to allow two hours at the clinic for preparation, operation and observation. When the anaesthetic wears off, you may feel some pain at the site of the operation and have some bruising. Pain medication and a tight-fitting, supportive underwear should relieve the soreness or discomfort. You should rest for a few days and avoid strenuous physical activity that exerts pressure on the groin or scrotum for one week. Normal day-to-day activity is not harmful but if your work is physically strenuous, you may need to take some sick leave. Your doctor will tell you when you can shower or bathe, when to remove the dressing and when you can have sexual intercourse again.

How soon is the operation effective?

You will still have sperm in your tubes after the operation and it may take as many as 16 ejaculations to clear. You will be asked to take along samples of your semen for testing to a pathology laboratory two months after the operation. You will need to use another form of contraception until these tests show your semen no longer contains sperm.

Where do the sperm go?

Sperm will continue to be produced in the testicles after the operation but are reabsorbed by the body.

Are there any side effects?

Apart from slight soreness, swelling and bruising immediately after the operation and lasting for a few days, serious side effects are rare. Some men form sperm antibodies in the blood after the operation but these do not appear to affect any other part of the body or cause any disease or discomfort. They may, however, be one of the reasons that prevent a man from fathering a child after having an reversal operation. There has been some concern about the possibility that a vasectomy may increase the likelihood of a man developing cancer of the prostate but evidence is lacking for this at present.

What are the possible complications?

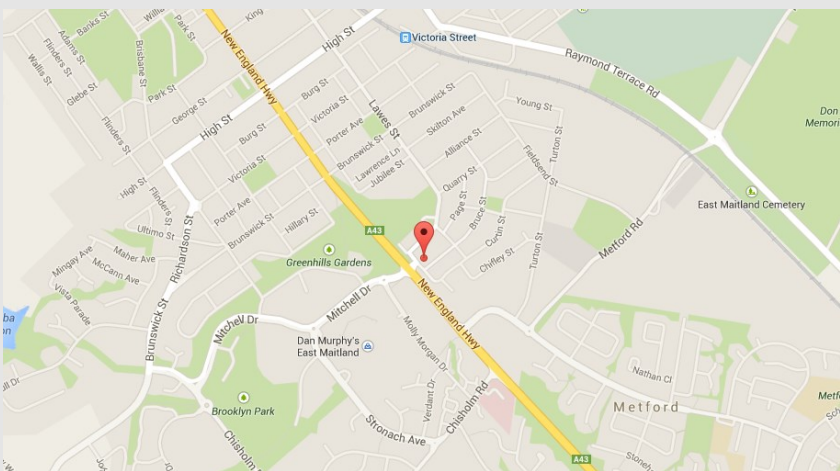
A small number of men experience bleeding or infection following a vasectomy. Rest, support for the scrotum, pain relief and antibiotics resolve most problems quickly. Occasionally sperm can leak out from the ends of the cut tubes and produce small hard lumps at the site of the operation. With time, this can occasionally lead to spontaneous rejoining of the tubes. But this is very rare.

Could the operation fail?

About one in every 300-500 vasectomies fails and the man may remain fertile or become fertile again. This can happen if the tubes are not fully blocked off or if they grow back together again or if a third vas deferens exists. Normally a failure is picked up when the sperm count is done two months after the operation but it can occur at any time, even years after the vasectomy.

What if I change my mind after a vasectomy?

Some surgeons have been reasonably successful at rejoining tubes that have been cut. However, these surgeons normally take on cases they consider straightforward, there is no guarantee that the man will then be able to father a child. If you are considering a vasectomy, you should consider it as a permanent operation. If you are unsure about wanting to father children in the future, you should not have a vasectomy.



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Opening hours:

Mon-Fri: 8am-6pm

Sat: 8am-12pm

Sunday and
Public holidays: Closed