

Sterilization by Vasectomy

A vasectomy is an operation that is performed to sterilize the male. It should be considered irreversible and therefore only be undertaken after careful thought and consideration by a couple who have decided not to have (more) children.

The operation is more than 99% effective with a long term failure rate of less than 1 in 2000. However, the procedure should NOT be relied upon as the only form of contraception until the result of 1 sperm count test, usually taken 16 weeks following vasectomy, has confirmed sterility.

It is not unusual for men to describe some discomfort in the scrotum after vasectomy; for a small number this symptom may continue for up to a year and for an even smaller number, 1% or less, in the very long term.

The operation involves making one or two small incisions in the scrotum. The sperm carrying tubes coming from each testicle are isolated and cut. The ends of these tubes remaining in the scrotum will be tied off. The cuts in the scrotum will then be closed using one (or two) self-dissolving stitches.

You will be provided with some pain killers after the operation and you should take them as prescribed even if things do not seem too uncomfortable. You may have a small amount of swelling following the operation, even slight bruising of your scrotum. Resting as much as possible for a few days, particularly with your legs elevated, is very important and will aid healing and prevent excessive swelling of your scrotal area.

About 24 hours after surgery you may bath or shower, allowing the water to soak off the wound dressing if one is present. Avoid the use of bubble baths and scented soaps. Dry yourself carefully afterwards. If you are sent home with antibiotics take the whole course given as instructed. You will find that supportive underwear, either a Jock strap or briefs will be more comfortable than boxer shorts.

You may have oozing from the wound sites for a few days. However, if:

- the ooze from the wounds changes to a yellow/green colour with or without an offensive smell
- the wound sites becomes very red and sore there is significant scrotal swelling or severe pain
- and with no improvement over 24-48 hours please contact your GP's surgery.

You may return to work when you feel comfortable and know that you can cope with the activities that your job entails. Avoid sex until the wound is healed and you are pain free.