

How can you get a vasectomy?

A vasectomy requires a physical exam and counseling by a qualified doctor or health care provider to do the surgery. If the vasectomy is paid for by federal or state funds, a 30-day waiting period is required. Call your local family planning clinic for information.

Male Sterilization

How a vasectomy works

Male sterilization, or vasectomy, is simple surgery in which the tubes (vas deferens) that carry sperm up to the penis are cut and sealed. Vasectomy is considered a permanent (not reversible) method of birth control and should be chosen only if you are sure that you do not want children in the future.

After a vasectomy, the man will still produce male hormones and sperm, but the sperm will not be able to join with the other fluids in the semen. When sperm cells aren't used, they die and the body will absorb them. The amount of fluid in the ejaculation is the same, except there are no sperm. Sex drive, ability to have sex and orgasms do not change because of a vasectomy.



How a vasectomy is done

Two male sterilization procedures are available in a clinic or doctor's office and take about 30 minutes. A local anesthetic (like dentists use) is injected into the skin of the sack that holds the testicles ("balls"). The first vasectomy procedure option — the *no scalpel (NSV)* — is done by making a small

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puncture in the testicles through which the tubes (vas deferens) are sealed. This procedure is shorter, generally has fewer side effects, and is less painful than the traditional method.

Using the **traditional** method, a small cut is made in the testicles and the tubes are pulled through the opening and sealed. The incision is then closed.

Since sperm may still be alive in the tubes, vasectomy is not effective until the man has had 15-20 ejaculations to clear out all sperm. The health care provider will give instructions about a follow up visit to check the man's semen to make sure no sperm are present.

Effectiveness

A vasectomy is in the Tier 1 level of contraceptive effectiveness and is a very effective, permanent method of birth-control. In the first year after a vasectomy, one couple in 1,000 is likely to have a pregnancy. Failure happens only rarely, when the tubes were not completely sealed during surgery or when the tubes grow back together.

A pregnancy may also happen if a couple does not use some other kind of birth control until the follow-up semen test shows that there are no sperm in his ejaculation fluid.

Benefits of a vasectomy

Sterilization is one of the safest, most effective and most cost-effective contraceptive methods. Vasectomy is safer, simpler, and less expensive than female sterilization. It is a very private method, with no need for partner involvement. Some people report an

increase in sexual desire because they no longer worry about unintended pregnancy. Research continues to show that men who have had a vasectomy are not more likely than other men to develop heart disease, cancer, or other illnesses.

Potential side effects and disadvantages

Most side effects after vasectomy go away within one or two weeks. Most men can expect minor bleedings under the skin, and some men have swelling, bruising and pain that can be reduced with mild pain medication.

It is recommended to not do heavy physical labor for at least 48 hours. An athletic supporter and ice packs can be used to make this healing time more comfortable. Sex can be resumed when the cut is healed and the area no longer sore.

A vasectomy can be expensive if you do not have insurance or financial support. Medicaid and other state funds can pay for the surgery. A vasectomy is considered permanent and irreversible. Even though it is possible with advanced surgery to reconnect the tubes, there is no guarantee this will result in future pregnancy. This reconnection surgery is very expensive and is not covered by Medicaid.

A vasectomy will not provide protection against HIV (AIDS) or sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as chlamydia, herpes, genital warts (HPV), gonorrhea, hepatitis B and syphilis.

Potential risks

Some men regret having had a vasectomy, particularly if they are in an unstable relationship, are very young or have no children at the time of the surgery.