

Woman's Health Options

Considering a Vasectomy?

What is a vasectomy?

A vasectomy is a permanent method of birth control and requires an operation. The operation blocks the man's sperm duct preventing sperm from entering ejaculate. It is not reversible; therefore, you must be sure that you do not want to have any more children before having a vasectomy. A vasectomy is **almost 100% effective**. That means that fewer than 1 woman out of 100 will become pregnant after her partner has a vasectomy.

Six reasons for a man to have a vasectomy:

1. You want to enjoy sex without worrying about pregnancy.
2. You do not want to have more children than you can care/provide for.
3. Your partner has health problems that might make pregnancy difficult.
4. You do not want to risk passing on a hereditary disease or disability.
5. You and your partner don't want to (or cannot) use other kinds of birth control.
6. You want to save your partner from the surgery involved in having her tubes tied.

Myth	Fact
Contraception should be the woman's responsibility.	Birth control is everyone's responsibility. Sexist attitudes about contraception may underlie and contribute to lack of interest and resistance towards vasectomy.
Vasectomy puts men off of sex and men can no longer ejaculate.	There is no medical/scientific evidence that suggests that a vasectomy will put men off of sex or prevents men from ejaculation.
Vasectomies reduce your testosterone levels and may lead to impotence.	After a vasectomy the testes still produce testosterone and therefore there is no reduction in masculinity. Additionally, there is no medical/scientific evidence that indicates that vasectomy leads to impotence.
Having a vasectomy is like being castrated (removal of the testicles).	Vasectomy is not castration! Vasectomy simply blocks the vas deferens so sperm can no longer mix with ejaculation.
Vasectomy is easily reversed.	Vasectomies can be reversed, however, the reversal is not easy, it has a low rate of success, and will not always lead to pregnancy.
Vasectomy causes testicular cancer.	There is no medical/scientific evidence that indicates that there is a causal relationship between having a vasectomy and developing testicular cancer.
Vasectomies are really painful.	Most men state that the only discomfort they felt was when the local anesthetic was administered. After this there is likely to be minimal discomfort.

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Information in this handout is adapted from
Capital Health: www.capitalhealth.ca

How does a vasectomy work?

The tubes that carry sperm are cut so that sperm cannot reach the penis. When a man ejaculates there will no longer be sperm present in the semen. Men are required to see their doctor as a follow up to ensure that no more sperm is present in the semen. Most doctors will recommend that a man ejaculate up to 30 times before he has sex (without a condom) to ensure that is no more sperm present.

How is a vasectomy done?

- ♂ Your family doctor might refer you to a specialist or your family doctor may do it himself or herself. Alberta Health Care will pay for a vasectomy.
- ♂ A vasectomy takes 15 to 20 minutes and is done in a doctor's office.
- ♂ The doctor freezes the area with a local anesthetic and makes one or two tiny cuts in the skin of the scrotum.
- ♂ The doctor gently pulls out each spermatic duct, cuts it, ties it off, and then puts it back in the sac.
- ♂ The tiny cuts are closed with a few stitches.
- ♂ Each doctor will perform the procedure differently, the procedure can be done with a no scalpel technique: the doctor feels for the tubes under the skin and then injects a local anesthetic that numbs the skin and both tubes. The tubes are secured in a clamp and the tip of forceps is used to pierce the skin. Both tips of the forceps are then inserted and spread to stretch a small opening exposing the vas. The first vas is lifted out and blocked or cauterized and then the second. No stitches are used to close the site.

What are some common side affects of a vasectomy:

- ♂ Bruising, swelling, and tenderness in the groin area for a few days.
- ♂ Light work can be done the next day and heavier work within a week.
- ♂ Very few men have more serious side effects, these can include:
 - ♂ Severe bleeding, bleeding or pus where the skin was cut, and severe pain or swelling in the testicle area (you should call your doctor immediately if you experience these side effects).

Do you need a referral for a Vasectomy?

You do not need a referral for a vasectomy consultation. You may contact any of the three doctors listed below for a consultation appointment.

For more information or to find a doctor call:

The Birth Control Centre	735-0010
Options Sexual Health Association	423-3737
Woman's Health Options Ltd.	484-1124
STD Clinic	413-5156
Capital Health Link	408-LINK (5465)

or contact directly:

Dr. Poitras	455-3311
Dr. Barton	475-1562
Dr. Metcalf	407-7372