

THE PATIENT'S GUIDE TO VASECTOMY

The Vasectomy Decision

This set of frequently asked questions is designed to help you understand what a vasectomy is, and whether it is the right form of birth control for you at this stage in your life.

What is a vasectomy?

Vasectomy is a simple operation that makes a man sterile, or unable to father a child. The procedure blocks the tubes that carry sperm from the testicles. After vasectomy, sperm cannot be mixed with semen, which is the fluid a man ejaculates during orgasm. Semen is not made in the testicles, and vasectomy doesn't affect the semen or how it is ejaculated. It's just that after vasectomy, a man's semen contains no sperm, so he cannot impregnate a woman.

How common is vasectomy?

Statistics show that around 600,000 men in the United States alone will receive a vasectomy each year with most of those procedures performed by vasectomy specialists.

Is a vasectomy an effective method of birth control?

According to a [study done by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists](#), only one out of every 2,000 vasectomies is unsuccessful. This is significantly better than the rate for female surgical sterilization, which is called tubal ligation. About one out of every 200 to 300 tubal ligations is unsuccessful.

The [National Institutes of Health has also studied vasectomy](#). In the first year after a vasectomy procedure, the study determined that only 15 to 20 out of 10,000 couples will experience a pregnancy. As a comparison, approximately 1,400 couples using a condom and 500 couples

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using oral contraceptives will experience a pregnancy each year. So the conception rate after vasectomy is very low. The main reason that a man could impregnate a woman after he has undergone a vasectomy is having unprotected sex too soon after the vasectomy procedure has taken place.

How is vasectomy done?

The procedure for a vasectomy involves the surgical interruption of the tubes which transport the sperm to the urinary tract from the testicles.

There are two main techniques for performing vasectomy. The older technique is called a "conventional vasectomy." The newer procedure is called a "no-scalpel vasectomy." Both techniques cut the two tubes, called the vas deferens, that carry sperm cells from the testicles.

The conventional vasectomy procedure

In this approach, a physician makes one or two small cuts in the skin of the scrotum, which has been numbed with a local anesthetic. The vas deferens is cut, and a small piece may be removed. Next, the doctor ties or clips the cut ends and sews up the scrotal incision. The procedure is then repeated on the other side.

The no-scalpel vasectomy procedure

The no scalpel vasectomy is a less invasive medical option. This unique procedure was developed by Chinese specialists in the 1970's and was begun to be practiced in the 1980s by American doctors. The main benefit of this procedure is that it eliminates the necessity to cut the patient's skin to reach the vas deferens.

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First, an instrument called a MadaJet delivers a stream of anesthetic so fine that it penetrates the skin and numbs a dime-sized patch of scrotal skin. Dr. Fisch then feels for the vas deferens tubes under the skin of the scrotum and holds them in place with a small clamp.

A special instrument is used to make a tiny puncture in the skin and stretch the opening so the vas can be lifted out of the scrotum, cut and cauterized. This approach results in very little bleeding, and no stitches are needed to close the punctures, which heal quickly by themselves. The newer method also produces less pain and fewer complications than conventional vasectomy.

For these reasons, Dr. Fisch only performs no-scalpel vasectomies.

Does vasectomy affect orgasm or masculinity?

No. Vasectomy has no effect on a man's sex drive, testosterone levels, erections, orgasms, or how much semen he ejaculates. Many men who have undergone the procedure, and their partners, find that sex is more spontaneous and enjoyable because they no longer have the inconvenience or concerns about contraceptives such as condoms or a diaphragm. They also don't have to worry about an accidental pregnancy.



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What are the advantages of vasectomy?

Vasectomy is a one-time, relatively inexpensive procedure that is often covered by insurance or state grant programs.

- It is less expensive and poses less of a medical risk than female sterilization.
- It is more dependable than any other form of birth control
- It is easier to reverse than female sterilization
- Eliminates risks to female partner of oral contraceptives or IUDs
- Freedom from hassle and worry of contraception

What if I change my mind and want to have children?

Reversing a vasectomy is possible, but it is a more complex and expensive surgical procedure with no guarantee of success.

It is possible for a man to store semen in a sperm bank to preserve the possibility of producing a pregnancy at some future date. However, sperm banking is costly, and the stored semen does not always remain healthy and able to cause pregnancy. For these reasons, Dr. Fisch advises that vasectomy be only undertaken by men who are prepared to accept the fact that they will no longer be able to father a child. The decision should be considered along with other contraceptive options. Men who are married or in a serious relationship should also discuss the issue with their partners.

Dr. Fisch also performs vasectomy reversals.

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Your Vasectomy

Here are some questions about how you prepare for your vasectomy with Dr. Fisch, what will happen on the day of the vasectomy, and the recovery from your vasectomy.

How do I prepare for a no-scalpel vasectomy?

Even though the no-scalpel method is very quick and simple, there are some things you need to do before the procedure. Dr. Fisch will review all of these preparations with you, as well as everything about the procedure to address any concerns or questions that you have.

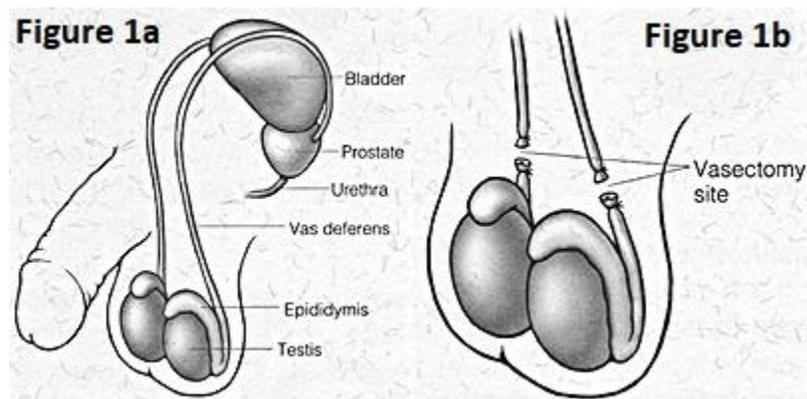
- Don't take any aspirin-containing or Ibuprofen medication for ten days before the procedure
- Don't use any powder or deodorant in the genital area on the day of your procedure
- Arrange to have someone drive you home
- Plan to do nothing but recline at home on the evening of the vasectomy

What will happen on the day of my vasectomy?

Dr. Fisch will re-review the entire vasectomy procedure with you. Dr. Fisch always explains the entire procedure and gains your consent himself; this process is never delegated to anyone else. Dr. Fisch also performs the entire procedure. You will also speak to the anesthesiologist, who will provide sedation to ensure an anxiety-free and pain-free experience.

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When the preparation for the procedure is complete, you will receive sedation. Then a small puncture will be made in the scrotum, with no incision required. Dr. Fisch will locate the vas deferens, the two tubes that carry semen from your testicles (See Figure 1a). He will bring part of each vas deferens through the puncture, cut it, and then cauterize and clip the ends of each vas deferens (See Figure 1b). Finally, he will gently return the vas deferens to the inside of the scrotum.



At this point, the surgery is over. There's no need for stitches or glue, as the puncture is so tiny it heals on its own. Eliminating incisions and stitches drastically reduces the amount of pain experienced in the later stages of recovery.

You will leave for the day with Dr. Fisch's direct cell phone number in case you have any questions or concerns after the procedure.



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What can I expect after a no-scalpel, no-needle vasectomy?

You can resume light activity the day after a vasectomy, and full activity two days after the vasectomy. The vast majority of men have little or no post-procedure pain. Only about 1 in 1000 men will have enough discomfort to request a prescription pain medication.

How soon can I have sex?

You can have sex two days after your vasectomy, but **you must continue to use some type of contraception until a semen analysis test confirms that you are sterile.** It generally takes about 8-12 weeks and 15-20 ejaculations to completely clear out the sperm that remain in the reproductive system after the vas deferens have been cut, but a few men will not be sperm-free for 5 or 6 months.

How can I contact Dr. Harry Fisch?

Please contact Dr. Fisch by phone at (212) 879-0800 or visit his website:

www.harryfisch.com/contact/ and request a consultation through his online form.

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