



Northumbria Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Vasectomy Service (local) anaesthetic

Issued by the integrated sexual health service



Things to consider before having a vasectomy

Vasectomy should be regarded as a permanent method of contraception and therefore you should talk through the effects with your GP or clinic doctor before making your decision to go ahead. Any future operation to reverse the procedure may not be successful and will not be available on the NHS.

What are the alternatives to this procedure?

There are a number of alternatives to vasectomy for preventing pregnancy. Other forms of contraception may be used (both male and female). These should be discussed with your doctor before deciding to have a vasectomy.

What is a vasectomy?

Vasectomy is male sterilisation. It is an operation which makes the man incapable of having children.

During the operation one or two small cuts are made in the skin of the scrotum. The tubes carrying the sperm from the testicles to the penis are called the 'vas deferens', or 'vas'. These will be located and a small piece removed from each tube. The tubes will be cut and tied or sealed so that eventually, there will be no sperm in the semen that is ejaculated.

The volume of semen will not be reduced after vasectomy. Your GP or clinic doctor will have discussed the issues around having a vasectomy with you.

What should I bring with me?

You should bring:

- A list of all medicines and tablets you are currently taking
- Any questionnaires, forms or documents given to you in clinic
- A book, magazine, or something that will occupy your time before the operation
- Tight fitting underwear to wear after the procedure. This holds your dressings in place and provides support for the scrotum.

Before the operation

Please remove the hair from the scrotal skin and both sides of the penis on the day of the operation just before you leave home. This can be done by shaving, clipping, waxing, or hair removal cream.

Admission

On arrival at the clinic or day unit your personal details will be checked by the receptionist and you will be escorted to your waiting area. You will again discuss the benefits, risks and possible complications. Then you will be asked to sign a consent form for the operation if you haven't already done so.

If you attend the day unit you will be given a theatre gown to wear and a theatre checklist will be completed as part of your nursing care.

Anaesthetic and operation

The anaesthetic injection to numb the skin and vas will be given to each side of the scrotum. This can be uncomfortable but once the anaesthetic takes effect there should be no further discomfort.

Your operation will be carried out either in a theatre or treatment room, it will take approximately 30 minutes, after which you will return to your waiting area to recover.

After your operation

On return to the waiting area your wounds will be checked by nursing staff. If you have any pain or discomfort, you will be given pain relief. You will be able to leave the unit as soon as you feel well enough to do so.

After local anaesthetic it is possible to drive home yourself but it would be better if you make arrangements to be taken home. If you have taken a sedative it is very important that you are taken home by someone else.

Work

You should be able to return to normal activities between 24 and 72 hours after the operation. You are advised to avoid heavy lifting for seven days while your wounds heal.

Wounds

You will have one or two small wounds on the scrotum. You may need stitches that will fall out by themselves after a week or two. No special wound care is necessary, and you may bathe or shower at any time after the operation.

What is the risk in having a Vasectomy?

- Failure rate is about 1 in 2,000 operations
- **Pain**

You may have some pain in the scrotum immediately after the operation and for a few days following. Your usual brand of painkillers should relieve your pain. However it is important not to take Aspirin. Close fitting underwear will also help, by supporting the scrotum.

Occasionally, in 5-15% of men, pain persists for longer and this is thought to be due to pinched nerves. This should be relieved by painkillers and will usually ease after a few weeks. However, pain may persist (chronic orchialgia) and can be difficult to manage in a small number of cases.

- **Bruising**

You may develop bruising following this procedure. Unless it is associated with a swelling in the scrotum, it is not significant and will settle by itself. The scrotal area may become quite colourful over the following week due to minor bleeding during the operation. If you have any concerns about swelling or excessive bruising, please contact the clinic where you had the vasectomy or your GP.

- **Infection**

Infection around the stitch in your wound occurs in about 2% of men undergoing vasectomy. Infection is usually shown by redness, discomfort and swelling around the incision sites. If you think that you have an infection arrange to see your GP or phone the clinic for advice. Antibiotics are usually prescribed and the infection clears within a few days. You can help to prevent this from happening by keeping your wound clean.

Contraception

You may remain fertile for several months after the operation, until all the sperm disappears from the semen. You should continue to use contraception until your semen sample is clear of sperm and you have received a letter from clinic confirming it. It is important that you ejaculate regularly to get rid of any remaining sperm.

Sport

All sport should be avoided for a week, and longer if the sport is particularly energetic, to allow time for your wounds to heal.

Sex

Sex should also be avoided for a week to allow the wounds to heal.

Providing a semen sample:

It is advised that you should provide your semen sample 16 weeks after your vasectomy. As well as this, you should ensure that you have ejaculated at least 20 times between your surgery and the time of your sample.

To confirm that this has happened then:

- You will be asked to collect the semen by masturbating into the specimen pot provided.
- The pot should then be handed into the Pathology lab reception at North Tyneside General Hospital within four hours of collection.
- If any sperm are present, then further samples will need to be tested.

You should continue to use contraception until you have been informed that your sample is clear.

You will be notified by letter of the results of your semen test.

For further information contact your GP, clinic doctor or the unit that you will attend for your procedure.

North Tyneside

One to One Centre

Shiremoor

Telephone: 0191 297 0441

Northumberland

One to One Centre

Morpeth

Telephone: 01670 515151

Other sources of information

www.nhs.uk/conditions/contraception/vasectomy-male-sterilisation/

www.northumbria.nhs.uk/sexual-health

Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on **03 44 811 8118**

Other sources of information

NHS 111

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx

NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)

www.nice.org.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone: **0800 032 0202**

Text: 01670 511098

Email: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

General Enquiries **03 44 811 8111**

www.northumbria.nhs.uk

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