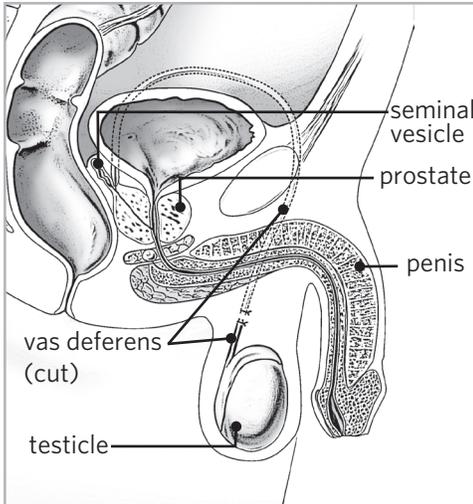


Vasectomy



When you have a vasectomy, you change the way sperm travels in your body. You'll still ejaculate, but your semen won't have any sperm in it. This makes you sterile, which means you won't be able to get a woman pregnant.

A vasectomy doesn't change your ability to get erections or your desire to have sex. And it doesn't change the way your body makes testosterone (or how much of this hormone you have in your body). So your body shape, the amount of muscle you have, your facial hair and voice won't change.

Choosing to have a vasectomy is a life-changing decision. Talk to your doctor about your situation, and weigh your options carefully.

What Happens During a Vasectomy

Normally, when you ejaculate, your sperm moves from your two testicles to your seminal vesicles through the vas deferens. In your seminal vesicles, sperm mixes with fluid from your prostate to make semen. Semen then moves from your prostate into the urethra where it leaves your body.

During a vasectomy, your doctor cuts out a section of the vas deferens on each side and seals the ends so sperm can't travel from your testicles to your penis anymore.

Deciding to Have a Vasectomy

Choosing to have a vasectomy is a personal decision. Consider the factors below before you decide. You'll also want to talk to your doctor and your partner about it.

Reasons to Have a Vasectomy:

- You and your partner don't want or don't plan to have any more children.
- You want a permanent and effective form of birth control.
- Your partner has health problems that would make pregnancy or other birth control methods unsafe.

Reasons Not to Have a Vasectomy:

- You may want children in the future.
- You're young.
- You're single, separated or divorced.
- You feel pressured by your partner.
- You plan to reverse your vasectomy in the future.

If you're considering a vasectomy, you should think of it as permanent. A vasectomy is complicated and expensive to reverse, and reversals are not always successful. Even if your reversal is successful, your sperm may not be able to fertilize an egg.

Before and After Your Vasectomy

To get ready for your vasectomy, your doctor may ask you to:

- Clean or shave your scrotum.
- Bring a jock strap to wear home.
- Ask a friend or family member to come with you and drive you home after the procedure.



To learn more, visit
**HealthyAdvice.com/
Vasectomy101**

You can also visit these
websites:

- **American Academy of
Family Physicians**
www.familydoctor.org
- **American Urological
Association**
www.urologyhealth.org

This *Healthy Advice*® handout may
be reproduced for patient use and
is provided courtesy of your doctor:

After the procedure, your stitches will dissolve in up to 10 days, and bruising should go away after two weeks. To help yourself heal, you can:

- Keep the area bandaged with clean gauze, and use a jock strap to hold your bandages in place.
- Don't take a bath or swim for the first two days after your surgery.
- Don't play sports or do heavy lifting for at least a week.
- Ease your pain by using an ice pack on your scrotum to reduce swelling, and talk to your doctor about treating cramps and pain with acetaminophen.

Watch for any complications. Call your doctor if you have:

- redness, swelling or pain that won't go away
- a marble-sized lump in your scrotum
- bleeding from your incision that won't stop
- fever

Sex After a Vasectomy

You can start having sex again about a week after your vasectomy. But use birth control to help prevent unwanted pregnancy until you know you're sterile.

It takes about 20 ejaculations for all of the sperm that's already traveled through the vas deferens to leave your body after a vasectomy. To figure out when you're sterile, you'll have two tests a few weeks apart after your vasectomy. Your doctor will analyze your semen and let you know when there's no more sperm in it.

Having a vasectomy doesn't protect you from sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV, so you'll still need to practice safer sex like using a condom.

Remember:

- Before you have a vasectomy, weigh all of your options. And think of a vasectomy as permanent.
- You aren't sterile immediately after a vasectomy. Your doctor will need to check your semen a few weeks after your vasectomy to make sure there's no sperm in your semen.
- A vasectomy doesn't protect you from STDs, so you'll still need to practice safer sex.