

Vasectomy

What is a vasectomy

During a vasectomy, the vas deferens from each testicle is clamped, cut or otherwise sealed. This prevents sperm from mixing with the semen that is ejaculated from the penis. The testicles continue to produce sperm but the sperm are reabsorbed by the body. As the tubes are blocked before the seminal vesicles and prostate, the patient still ejaculates about the same amount of fluid.

It usually takes several months after a vasectomy for all remaining sperm to be ejaculated or reabsorbed. It is important to use another method of birth control until a semen sample has been tested to show a zero sperm count.

What to expect after a vasectomy

Pain and swelling: after a vasectomy you may have some swelling and minor pain in your scrotum for several days after the surgery. Apply cold packs to the area and lie on your back as much as possible for the first day. Wear comfortable underwear to protect the area. Painkillers can be prescribed or recommended by your doctor to help with pain management during the recovery process.



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Wound care: wound dressings will be placed on the surgical area. The stitches disappear within a short space of time. It is not recommended to put different ointments and dressings on the wound if it is not prescribed by the treating doctor. Washing of the wound with soap and clean water is recommended except if the treating doctor prescribes cleaning agents. It is best to avoid full body bathing until the second day after surgery but sponge baths are fine. After the second day you can shower or bath as normal and just let the soapy, warm water run over the incision and pat it dry.

Sex: a vasectomy will not interfere with your sex drive, ability to obtain erections, sensation of orgasm or ability to ejaculate. You may have occasional, mild, aching in your testicles during sexual arousal for a few months after surgery.

When to call the surgeon after a vasectomy

When any of the following are experienced:

- **bleeding from the surgical site** (if you notice oozing it may be helpful to apply gentle pressure with a gauze) and
- signs and symptoms of **infection** like fever and drainage from the surgical site that has a foul smell, is thick, yellow or green.

A follow up visit to the treating doctor will be recommended if needed.

Reference/s: **Marshall S. & Jones S. 2010.** Vasectomy. [Online]. Available from: <http://www.webmd.com/sex/birth-control/vasectomy-14387> [Accessed 29 January 2013].

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