

# Having a vasectomy

Urology department

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[yeovilhospital.nhs.uk](http://yeovilhospital.nhs.uk)

The logo for Yeovil Hospital Healthcare, featuring a stylized 'Y' inside a circle with a rainbow-colored border.  
Yeovil Hospital  
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Vasectomy is the permanent method of contraception for men. It is safe, simple and effective.

### **What is vasectomy?**

Vasectomy is a surgical procedure which cuts the sperm-carrying tubes. It prevents the sperm, made by the testicles, from joining the fluid at ejaculation. The sperm only form two per cent of this fluid - the rest of which comes from other glands such as the prostate.

### **Who chooses vasectomy?**

Any man who feels that his family is complete or who is certain he will never want children. He does not have to be married or have children already.

Vasectomy does not help anyone who is going through sexual difficulties within a relationship. Vasectomy should always be thought of as a permanent, irreversible form of contraception.

We want you to read this information booklet and be certain, in your own mind, that vasectomy is right for you. You will have the opportunity to ask questions before the operation. We will also be asking you to sign a consent form to ensure you understand this booklet and the consequences of the operation.

### **How effective is vasectomy?**

Vasectomy is the safest form of contraception available but, even so, there is a small chance of failure, 1 in 1,000, over the life of a man. This can occur because the sperm-carrying tubes can rejoin. This may happen soon after the procedure and will be detected. However, rarely, this may happen some years after the operation and the only way of knowing would be if your partner became pregnant. A few men have more

than one sperm carrying tube which may be another reason for early failure. In cases of failure, a further operation can be arranged.

### **What can go wrong?**

Vasectomy is safe and long-term problems are rare. Any surgical procedure carries a small risk of bleeding and infection. Immediately after a vasectomy, some men can get excessive bruising and swelling.

As with any operation, the wound can become infected. Very rarely this can spread to involve the tubes and testicles. You should avoid heavy work and sports for about a week. Later on a small nodule sometimes develops around the cut end of the tube. This is harmless but occasionally causes discomfort.

Very rarely some men experience chronic testicular pain with no apparent cause.

### **Does vasectomy increase the risk of cancer?**

There is no conclusive evidence of a link between vasectomy with testicular or prostatic cancer. However, we would recommend that all men should regularly check their testicles for any lumps.

### **Is vasectomy permanent?**

A vasectomy operation must be considered final. If you have any doubts about being sterilised, you should not go ahead with the operation. It is possible to surgically rejoin the cut ends of the sperm-carrying tubes but the sperm are often damaged and unable to function normally so infertility persists.

### **How is it done?**

A vasectomy is a simple operation that takes about 20 minutes. It involves injecting a small amount of local anaesthetic into the skin of

your scrotum (bag of skin over the testicles). The anaesthetic is also injected around the tubes, called the vas, that carry the sperm up from each testicle. These tubes lie just under the skin of your scrotum where they are easy to reach.

When the skin and tubes are completely numb, a small cut is made and a piece is removed from each tube. The ends are tied off and buried away from each other. The cut is closed with dissolving stitches.

### **When will I be sterile?**

You will not be sterile immediately after your vasectomy. It takes some time - usually up to five months - for all the sperm in the storage system ahead of where your tubes have been blocked to work their way through.

After your operation, you will be given two pots and will receive instructions for collecting one or two samples of seminal fluid. This should be done at five months after your operation.

**Only when you have produced one or two samples confirming the vasectomy has been a success, can you be considered sterile.**

You will need to continue to use contraception until we have confirmed that you are sterile.

### **Will vasectomy affect my sex life?**

Orgasm, ejaculation and the male hormones are not affected by vasectomy. Sperm are still produced but the way into the ejaculate is blocked and so they are reabsorbed by the body. Some couples find new sexual freedom when they no longer have to worry about pregnancy.

## **Before your vasectomy**

Just before your operation, you should shower or bathe.

## **After your vasectomy?**

A vasectomy is performed under local anaesthetic which takes about one hour to completely wear off. Take some simple pain medication, such as Paracetamol, if needed. You should expect some discomfort but this varies from person to person. You will be able to pass water normally.

**Arrange for someone to accompany you as you will need to be driven home. You may need to have one day off work following your vasectomy, longer if you do manual work.**

Take it easy for the next couple of days. This is important and helps reduce the swelling and discomfort. You will experience a variable amount of swelling and bruising. You may find it more comfortable to wear tight fitting pants for support rather than boxer shorts.

The day after your vasectomy, you can take off the dressing and have a shower or bath. Dry the cut afterwards with a clean towel. If it is dry, leave it open to the air; if it is still oozing, cover it with a clean, dry dressing.

After the first 48 hours, do what is comfortable and gradually return to normal activity. Do not do any heavy work during the first week. Sexual activity can be resumed whenever you are comfortable. The stitches will dissolve and fall out on their own. Avoid contact sports for at least two weeks. If you are worried, consult your doctor.

Continue to use contraception until you have heard from us that the vasectomy has been a success.

**For further information**

**Urology department:**

**01935 384 345 / 384 227**

**After 7pm, contact senior sister:**

**01935 384 525**

**If you need this leaflet in another format please ask a member of staff.**

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