

Vasectomy Service

In the UK vasectomy is becoming increasingly popular and is now relied upon by more than half a million couples. Vasectomy is one of the safest, simplest and most effective methods of contraception but, because it should also be considered permanent, it is important for you to be fully informed before deciding to proceed.

Suitability for Vasectomy

We will consider any man for a vasectomy who has seriously thought about the implications of his decision and is **positive he has had all the children he will ever want**. You are strongly advised not to undergo vasectomy if you have any sexual or personal problems, as this is not a good time to make such an irrevocable decision.

The vasectomy procedure must be seen as permanent

If reversal is a concern while you are considering vasectomy, or if you think there is a significant chance that you will change your mind in later life as a result of a change in circumstances, it is strongly advised that you postpone any decision until you are 100% sure that you want **no more children under any circumstances**. For these reasons you should discuss this in detail before being referred to our Clinic for vasectomy. You will be again offered some counselling by our Vasectomist prior to the operation all the implications of the procedure and its permanency, though we will assume that you have made your final decision before asking your own doctor to refer you.

Sperm makes up approximately 5% of the fluid ejaculated at orgasm and the purpose of the operation is to prevent sperm from being present in this fluid. To achieve this we need to seal the tubes (vas deferens) which carry the sperm to the fluid. The fluid originates in glands at the base of the penis and so the quantity produced is reduced a little by the operation. Orgasm and ejaculation are not affected.

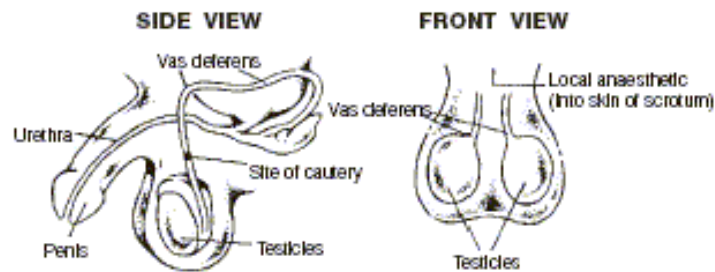
There is no evidence of any long-term risk to men's physical or mental health after vasectomy, in fact many couples find greater enjoyment once the risk of unwanted pregnancy has been removed. Sperm continues to be produced by the testicles but its passage to the penis is blocked so it is re-absorbed by the body, just as the body continually re-absorbs all unused cells.

On Arrival at the Clinic

The first person you will see at the vasectomy clinic will be the Receptionist who will direct you to the waiting area and give you a health questionnaire to complete. You will then be taken to the pre-operative room where the Vasectomist will discuss the procedure and aftercare with you. During your consultation the doctor will discuss with you and your partner if they accompany you, all aspects of vasectomy and its effects, and will answer any questions you may have. You will be asked to sign a consent form. It will be possible for your partner to stay with you throughout the operation, if you both wish. If you have any localised infection around the genitals, we would prefer to delay operation until this has been treated. Also, if you have any chronic illness, particularly any heart condition or blood disorder, please let us know in advance.

The technique used will take only a short time as the operation is carried out under local anaesthetic on the same day; the whole appointment should take about an hour. No further visits to the clinic are needed and the follow-up tests are sent through your own doctor's surgery.

Vasectomy has absolutely no effect on the production of male hormones, the only difference is purely mechanical in that the semen no longer contains sperm.



The Operation

For many men this will be the first time they have had any operation. The doctor present during your operation does not wear a mask and will talk to you throughout the procedure and will do his best to help you relax. The doctor gives you a small injection of local anaesthetic into the skin of the scrotum (the sac holding the testicles), not the testicles themselves. This numbs the area but leaves the patient alert. The local anaesthetic used is much the same as used by dentists and therefore the sensation felt is similar - an initial stinging followed by complete numbness of the area. A small incision (approx 1 centimetre) is made in the scrotum and the tubes are located and fused using cautery (a process which seals both the tubes using heat). A small section of each tube is removed to enhance the effectiveness of the operation. No internal or external stitches are used.

After the Operation

Most men feel some degree of discomfort during the first few days after operation. The degree of discomfort varies from person to person and Paracetamol is usually sufficient to relieve any pain. Some bruising can be expected around the testicles which usually fades after a couple of weeks but may last longer. Although normal activities can be resumed shortly after operation we advise all men to take things easy and to avoid any strenuous exercise or heavy lifting for about one or two weeks. Sexual activity can be resumed as soon as you feel it will be comfortable, however, we do advise you to wait a few days. A small painless lump (less the size of a pea) may develop at the operation site and persist for a while. This is caused by the body's natural healing reaction and no specific treatment is usually needed. Complications, although uncommon, can occur with any surgical procedure, however minor, and if you are worried about anything please contact your own GP for advice.

Because there are still sperm in the vas deferens above the site of the operation it can take quite a number of ejaculations to clear the sperm, so it is **essential to continue an alternative method of contraception until you are informed that your system is clear of sperm**. You are required to provide a sample of your semen at around 14 & 16 weeks post-operatively (after a minimum of 30 ejaculations). However, on occasion, several more tests may be required until the system is completely free of sperm. If this should happen we will advise you accordingly. In rare cases the tubes may not have been sealed completely or the sealed ends of the tubes may grow back together again and since this usually happens in the first three months, we are able to detect this by testing the semen. Spontaneous re-joining of the tubes can occasionally occur even after your tests have proved negative, sometimes years later, **but this is very rare**.