

Vasectomy

Vasectomy is a surgery to cut the vas deferens, the tubes through which a man's sperm travels. After a vasectomy, sperm cannot move out the testes. A man who has had a vasectomy cannot make a woman pregnant. A vasectomy is sometimes called "tying the tubes" or "getting snipped"

Description

Vasectomy is usually done in the surgeon's office under local anesthesia. You will be awake, but will not feel any pain. A small micro-cut is made in the upper part of the scrotum, and the tubes (vas deferens) are tied off and cut apart. Stitches may be used to close the wound.

You should be able to return home as soon as the procedure is completed, and return to work the next day if your job is not physically strenuous. Full physical activity may be resumed in 3-7 days.

This surgery does not affect a man's ability to achieve orgasm, ejaculate, or have an erection. There will still be fluid (semen) in the ejaculate, but it will contain no sperm.

Indications

Vasectomy may be recommended for adult men who are certain that they wish to prevent future pregnancies. A vasectomy makes a man permanently sterile.

A vasectomy is not recommended as a temporary form of birth control, but it may possibly be reversed if you change your mind. However, reversal surgery is a much more involved operation. The results vary depending on the location of the vasectomy site along the vas deferens and the experience of the surgeon.

Risks

Some swelling and bruising of the scrotum is common. There is no serious risk to vasectomy. A semen sample is taken after the operation to make sure it does not contain sperm and that the procedure was done correctly.

On very rare occasions, the tubes can grow back together again (recanalize). If this happens, sperm can mix with semen and it is possible to make your partner pregnant.

Expectations after surgery

Most men recover quickly with no problems. The sperm count gradually decreases after vasectomy. After about 3 months, sperm are no longer present in the semen. A semen sample must be examined and found to be totally free of sperm before you can rely on the vasectomy as a method of birth control. You should continue to use contraception until 2 to 3 sperm count tests are negative.

Convalescence

You should wear a scrotal supporter for 3 to 4 days after the procedure. An ice pack may be used to prevent or reduce swelling. Pain medicine, taken by mouth, can usually help relieve discomfort. Most men return to work within 2 to 3 days. You can have sexual intercourse as soon as you feel ready, usually about a week after the surgery.