
◆ **VASECTOMY - some facts** ◆

A vasectomy is a simple, surgical procedure, which makes a man sterile or unable to father a child, and it is one of the most effective methods of contraception.

The operation is done through a small cut made in the top part of the front of the scrotum, just beneath the base of the penis. The tubes that carry sperm from each of the testicles are cut, and this stops the flow of sperm from the testicles to the storage chambers up near the bladder (the seminal vesicles). At the end of the procedure, the skin cut is closed with a dissolving stitch, and a dressing is applied to the wound to protect it. This all usually takes between 20 to 40 minutes to complete.

The operation can either be performed with local anaesthetic alone or with additional sedation anaesthetic for those who are more concerned about discomfort.

Most men who have a vasectomy will need a few days rest afterwards. It is normal to get some local soreness, swelling and sometimes bruising after the surgery, and these usually settle over several days. Persistent scrotum discomfort is very uncommon. Office/desk workers can usually return to work after about 3 days, but strenuous work and exercise should be avoided for a week. A small number of men will have problems with bleeding or infection after a vasectomy, and these complications can usually be settled with some rest and straightforward medical treatment.

A vasectomy does not make you sterile immediately- most men need to have a number of ejaculations to clear out all the stored sperm. A sperm count test is done after 2 months to confirm the success of the operation, and, until the result of that test is known, another form of contraception needs to continue to be used.

The sperm that are still being made by the testicles are broken down and reabsorbed by the body. Most men will form sperm antibodies after a vasectomy, and these antibodies do not cause any harmful effects.

Vasectomy **does not**:

- ▶ change your sexual abilities or your testosterone levels.
- ▶ stop you from ejaculating during sex.
- ▶ cause cancer of the testicles or prostate.
- ▶ protect you from sexually transmitted infections

A vasectomy **does**:

- ▶ provide very effective protection from unwanted pregnancies.
- ▶ need to be considered permanent.

Vasectomy reversal is possible - it is very expensive, and the success rate is low. Nowadays, there are special IVF techniques (also expensive) that can help men who have had a vasectomy to father a child. Realistically, vasectomy should be thought of as a **lifelong** form of contraception for those who are sure that they do not want any more children.

If you are interested in a vasectomy or want more detailed information, please contact the clinic.