



## Fact Sheet - English

# VASECTOMY



### What Is A Vasectomy?

A vasectomy is an operation that men can have so that they cannot make a woman pregnant. It is a permanent form of contraception.

### How Does A Vasectomy Work?

It prevents sperm from travelling out of the testes (balls) and into the semen. If there are no sperm in the semen, a woman cannot become pregnant. It does not change a man's ability to enjoy sex or to ejaculate.

### How Well Does It Work?

A vasectomy works very well. It is more than 99% effective.

### What Happens When You Have A Vasectomy?

A vasectomy is a simple operation that takes about 20-40 minutes. It is usually done under sedation or a local anaesthetic, but it can be done under a general anaesthetic. The doctor makes a small opening in the front of the man's scrotum, and cuts and seals the ends of the tubes that carry the sperm. The opening in the scrotum is closed with a stitch or by pressing the skin edges together.

After the operation, the man may be asked to wait at the centre for up to two hours. Pain-killing medication and tight-fitting supportive underpants can help relieve any soreness.

### After The Vasectomy

The man should rest for a few days and avoid any heavy physical exercise for one week. The doctor will tell him when he can shower or bathe, when to remove the dressing, and when he can have sexual intercourse again.

### When Will It Be Effective?

A man will still have sperm for some time after the operation. It may take as many as 20 ejaculations to clear. He has to take a sample of his semen to a pathology laboratory for testing two months after the operation. He will need to use another form of contraception, e.g. condoms, until tests show his semen has no sperm in it.

### Are There Any Side Effects?

There may be slight soreness, swelling and bruising that lasts for a few days after the operation. Serious side effects are rare.

### What If It Doesn't Work?

About one in every 500-1,000 Vasectomies fail and the man may stay fertile or become fertile again. Normally this is picked up in the tests three months after the operation, but it can happen at any time.

### Can A Vasectomy Be Reversed?

Sometimes a vasectomy can be reversed but even if the operation is successful, there is no guarantee that the man will then be able to father a child. If a man thinks there is any chance he may want to father children in the future he should not have a vasectomy.

### How Do You Get A Vasectomy?

A vasectomy referral can be arranged through a local doctor or Family Planning clinic. A man does not need permission from his partner to have a vasectomy.

### For Further Information

- Contact the Family Planning NSW Talkline on 1300 658 886 or go to [www.fpnsw.org.au/talkline](http://www.fpnsw.org.au/talkline)
- NRS (for deaf) 133 677
- Or visit your nearest Family Planning clinic

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