



# Female Sterilization



Community and Health  
Services Department

## (Tubal Ligation)

### What is female sterilization?

Female sterilization is also known as tubal ligation. It involves cutting or blocking a woman's fallopian tubes. This prevents the sperm cells from reaching the egg cell, so fertilization cannot take place.

### How effective is tubal ligation?

A tubal ligation is a permanent form of birth control, and so it is not appropriate for women who may want to have a baby in the future. The failure rate is 0.5 percent, meaning that the procedure may not be effective for one of every 200 women who have a tubal ligation.

### Important to know

This procedure does not reduce a woman's sex drive, sexual performance or sexual enjoyment.

### Why consider a tubal ligation?

A tubal ligation may be appropriate if:

- a woman does not want to have any more children or does not want any children at all
- other methods such as hormonal methods or an IUD are not an option
- there is a risk of passing on hereditary defects
- the woman has medical concerns that may intensify during pregnancy

## What are the advantages and disadvantages of a tubal ligation?

### Advantages

- permanent
- highly effective
- safe
- quick recovery
- covered by OHIP
- no need to buy anything
- no need for partner compliance
- no need to interrupt lovemaking
- privacy of choice
- lack of significant long-term side effects

## Disadvantages

- it is considered to be irreversible, because it is a permanent method of contraception
- regret is possible, especially if the woman made this decision when she was in an unstable relationship, younger than 31 years of age, or in a financial crisis
- it requires a general anaesthetic
- there may be discomfort after the surgery
- there is a risk of infection or surgical complications
- it may take two to three days to recover, possible work absence
- another form of birth control may be needed for one month after surgery, in case ovulation occurred just before the surgery
- there is no protection against sexually transmitted infections, including the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)

**Remember:** A tubal ligation prevents pregnancy but does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Use a latex condom every time you have sex.

