

# Male Sterilization (Vasectomy)

## What is male sterilization?

Male sterilization, also known as a vasectomy, is a surgical procedure where the tubes that carry sperm from the testicles to the penis are surgically closed or blocked to prevent sperm from travelling to the penis. When the man ejaculates, his semen does not contain any sperm.

### Effectiveness

A vasectomy is considered to be a permanent method of birth control, but takes up to four months after the surgery to become effective. The failure rate is 0.1 per cent meaning that the procedure may not be effective for one of every 1,000 men who has a vasectomy.

Before a man obtains a vasectomy, he should fully understand the operation. If he thinks he may want children in the future, a vasectomy is not appropriate.

After a vasectomy, the man still ejaculates seminal fluid from the penis at orgasm. For the first few months following the vasectomy, this fluid may contain sperm that were present before the surgery. The vasectomy is not effective until all these sperm are ejaculated.

Semen should be tested three to four months after your vasectomy to make sure sperm are no longer present.

A vasectomy does not affect a man's sex drive, sexual performance or sexual enjoyment.

### Advantages

- Highly effective (99.9 per cent success rate)
- No contraceptive routine required
- No significant long-term side-effects
- Covered by OHIP
- Less invasive and has fewer complications than female sterilization
- Does not interfere with intercourse

### Disadvantages

- Considered to be permanent (difficult and expensive to have reversed)
- Possible short-term, surgery-related complications
- Not effective immediately. There is a wait period of three to four months after the vasectomy to make sure that the sperm count is zero. Another form of birth control must be used during this time

A vasectomy does not protect you from sexually transmitted infections. Always use a condom from beginning to end of all sexual contact to reduce your risk.

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