

## Information sheet for patients having a vasectomy (male sterilization)

Please discuss with your GP about other methods of contraception so that you are aware of all your options. You can also find detailed information about the different methods on <https://patient.info/sexual-health/contraception-methods>. If you have decided you want to be sterilised, please read the information below as well as the contents of the consent form before your appointment.

### BEFORE THE OPERATION

- If you have had any operations of the scrotum/testes even as a child, please call us. You may require an assessment first before we can book in for our one stop clinic.
- Please trim or shave the hair around the scrotum (under the penis) on the morning of the operation.
- Please have a light meal on the day of the procedure. You should not eat heavily beforehand, nor drink alcohol on that day.
- You will need to wear well-fitting and supportive underpants or swimming trunks (ie not loose boxers) after the procedure for several days.
- Your appointment will include an examination of the scrotum, counselling and consent, followed immediately by your operation and the postoperative advice. Your overall visit at the centre is about 45 minutes.
- Occasionally it may not be possible to perform the procedure under local anaesthetic. This may be because it is not possible to mobilise the tubes (vas deferens) to the surface of the skin or a medical concern. You might then be offered referral to a hospital to have the operation done under general anaesthetic if you wish.
- We would advise you have someone drive you home after the procedure, as some car insurance policies may not cover you after an operation. If this is not possible, we advise you remain in the building under supervision for a minimum of 30mins before driving off due to the small risk of post operative syncope.

### THE OPERATION

- We use a minimally invasive technique. A small amount of local anaesthetic is used to numb an area in the scrotal skin using a very fine needle, and once numb, more anaesthetic is infiltrated deeper around the vas (tube carrying the sperm).
- The operation consists of removing a piece of the vas through a tiny incision in the scrotal skin and cauterizing the ends and the lumen using diathermy.
- The procedure is then repeated on the other side.
- In most cases, only one incision is required. We prefer to use a couple of dissolvable stitches to close the wound, although this is not always necessary. It takes about 2 weeks for the stitches to dissolve.

### AFTER THE OPERATION

The nurse will spend a few minutes with you and give you after care advice and answer any questions you may have. You will be supplied with a specimen bottle and the paperwork needed for you to arrange your semen analysis after 16 weeks. You may also be asked to fill in a satisfaction questionnaire about your experience at the Surgical Centre. Thank you in advance, as this helps us to improve our service. You can leave when you feel ready.

## **COMMON Qs and As:**

Below are common questions patients ask us:

1. **Do I still need to use contraception?** Yes. Please be aware that you must not abandon contraception until we have informed you in writing that your semen sample is negative for sperm.
2. **Can the operation fail?** Yes. The procedure occasionally fails to render the patient sterile due to early re-joining of one or both tubes. This happens in up to 2% of cases. Your semen analysis at 16 weeks will pick this up. Late re-joining can also occur but is rare, believed to occur in 1:2000 vasectomies. Because it is very rare, further semen tests are not routinely done. Unfortunately, it is usually picked up if your partner becomes pregnant. You should contact us if this happens.
3. **How and when do I do my sperm test?** Post- op semen test- This is essential to check that your operation has been successful. As soon as possible after your procedure please telephone the **Haematology Laboratory at RCHT (01872 252502)** to book an appointment for a Post vasectomy semen analysis at or after 16 weeks. This analysis is carried out by appointment only and cannot be accommodated without booking an appointment.

You will be provided with a small container and a request form after the operation for you to use to do your sperm test. Please produce one semen specimen by masturbation no sooner than 16 weeks after your operation. Condoms should not be used for that purpose. Please wash/shower before the test. It is estimated that men need to ejaculate at least 24 times during those 16 weeks before the test to clear the sperm that are already present in the tubes. It is also advised you have a period of abstinence between 2-7 days before doing the test. If for any reason, you have not been able to ejaculate 24 times, please reschedule your appointment with the lab until such time you have been able to do that.

**At your prebooked appointment time** Please deliver to the Haematology Laboratory reception (located in the link corridor via the Trelawney entrance), Royal Cornwall Hospital, Truro, TR1 3LJ. Your sample should be less than 2 hours old at delivery. Your partner may deliver your sample for you if you are unable to do so yourself. You will be informed of the result in writing about 2-3 weeks later. Most men are cleared on their first sample. However, about 20% of men will have a positive test on the first sample and will require further tests.

4. **What happens if my test is positive?-** A first positive test happens in about 20%. In most cases, there are small numbers and non-motile sperm. We cannot give you clearance and your test would need to be repeated. You will be sent another form by post, but you will need to obtain another specimen bottle (ask for a silver top container) from your GP surgery. Sometimes, we may need to request a Fresh Semen Analysis. This looks at specific numbers and whether the sperm are motile or not (like a fertility test).
5. **When can I resume intercourse?** One week after. This allows time for the tubes to remain sealed. On the first or subsequent ejaculations, it is possible that you may experience some blood staining which is usually brown, stale blood. This is perfectly normal as the tubes are clearing themselves after the operation.
6. **Do I need to take painkillers?** We recommend you take regular 'over the counter' painkillers as soon as you get home and do so for a few days. Keep the wound dry for 48 hours if at all possible.
7. **When can get back to work or exercise?** It is advisable that you make arrangements for light work for up to 2 weeks after your operation. No sports, heavy exercise or swimming is advised during that time. We recommend 4 weeks if you do any contact or high impact sports. Your surgeon will give you a fit note if required.
8. **Can the operation be reversed in the future?** This is possible to do but the results are not good. It is best to regard a vasectomy as a permanent procedure. Vasectomy reversal is not available under the NHS.
9. **Will my sex life be affected?** Sexuality and virility- This is not affected. You will continue to have normal ejaculates but without sperm.

## **COMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

Any surgical procedure has an element of risk attached to it and occasionally things do not turn out as well as expected. Fortunately the complications are uncommon.

- A little soreness and bruising are usual.
- Wound haematoma (discrete painful collection of blood) or infection (painful red, hot wound +- a fever) do occasionally occur and may necessitate further treatment with drainage of the blood collection or antibiotics. These complications can occur in up to 5% of cases. Therefore you should report excessive discomfort or wound problem to your doctor.
- Granuloma- This is uncommon and consists of a tender lump at the end of the vas and is usually noticed several months after the operation. This is caused by a leak of sperm. It normally settles spontaneously. If persistent, it can be removed surgically.
- Slight swelling of the testis may occur. This resolves spontaneously but may take several weeks.
- Positive test at 7 months- Some men can have persistent but very small number of sperm, which are not motile. This is determined through a fresh semen analysis. In this case, we will issue you with a letter of 'special clearance'. Although pregnancy is not known to occur, the risk is not zero.  
Post vasectomy pain syndrome- An uncommon complication - pain may be experienced continually or intermittently for months or even years after. It may be very troublesome and occasionally require a further surgical procedure or vasectomy reversal. It is not possible to predict who might get it. Nationally, the quoted incidence is 0.5%, although as high as 5% has been reported whole-wide. Whilst this is uncommon, some patients may experience symptoms severe enough to impact on their quality of life.

### **Special considerations:**

#### 1. Vasectomy and Younger Men

If you are less than 30 years old and you have had fewer than 2 children, especially if you are single (whatever your age), please consider the following points before having a vasectomy:

**1.1 You may regret it.** Men who have vasectomies when they are in their 20's, especially if they have had fewer than two children, are the ones most likely (1 in 7 risk) to seek vasectomy reversal at a later date. They may regret their vasectomy decision particularly if reversal is not successful.

**1.2. You may change.** Many men who think they will never want children when they are in their early 20's are delighted with fatherhood when they are in their 30's. You may be totally convinced now that you will never want children, but people change, and you may have a much different outlook 10 years from now.

**1.3. Women change.** Similarly, women who have no desire for children when they are in their early 20's may have a much stronger desire when they are in their 30's and when many of their friends are having children of their own.

**1.4. Relationships end.** Since about 42% of UK marriages end in divorce (10% of civil partnerships 'divorcing'), you may not be with the same partner ten years from now and a new partner may have a much stronger desire for children than your present partner does. So just because your present partner claims that she will never want children, her tune may change, or she may not even be your partner 10 years from now.

**1.5. Young men may wish to consider sperm storage.** It is well worth the investment, (typically £300 for first sample, £150 subsequent samples, then £300 annually thereafter) but do bear in mind that there is quite a cost implication involved in using the sperm to create a pregnancy subsequently.

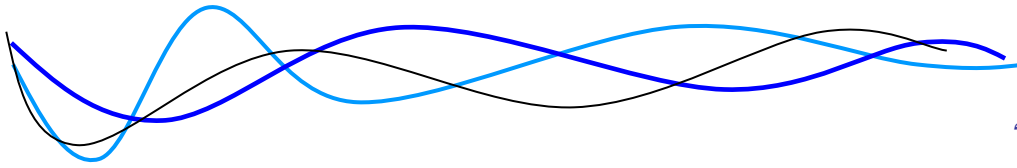
#### 2. Patients with partners over the age of 40

When thinking about a vasectomy, please bear in mind that vasectomy does not work immediately, and there is at least 4 months wait until your first test. You should consider menopause in your decision making and some women have an early menopause or may even be going through the menopause. Thus, vasectomy may not be needed for very long and you might consider the risks might outweigh any benefits.

## WHERE TO GET ADVICE

If you have any concerns during your post-op period, you can get advice or help from one of these sources.

- Contact our surgical team on 01726 885104 during office hours.
- Your own doctor or nurse if it is easier for you.
- Out of hours GP service- contact 111 or the OOH number provided by your surgery
- Your local emergency department



*"To improve the health and well-being of those we care for"*

## REQUEST BY A PATIENT TO STERILISATION BY VASECTOMY

**I NAME:** <Patient Name>

**NHS NO:** <NHS number>

**D.O.B:** <Date of Birth>

I, hereby consent to undergo the operation of vasectomy under local anaesthetic, the nature and effect of which has been explained to me by my Surgeon. I have been told about and considered alternative methods of contraception.

I confirm that I have received, read and understood the information leaflet on the Probus Surgical Centre website or provided to me. I have been told that the object of the operation is to render me sterile and incapable of further parenthood and the effect of the operation may be irreversible. I understand I should not abandon other methods of contraception, prior to receipt of written notification that at least one sperm count at 16 weeks after my vasectomy has proved clear, or special clearance has been given, which may take up to 7 months.

I understand that the operation may occasionally fail (in up to 2% of cases) because the vas re-joins spontaneously in the first 16 weeks. I have been told of the following possible risk and benefits. Any complications may require further medical treatment, hospitalisation or further surgery.

**Benefits:** No General Anaesthetic Complications  
Sterility

**Risks:** Haematoma (1%)  
Post Vasectomy/Scrotal Pain (typically 0.5% but up to 5% has been reported)  
Infection (1%)  
Early failure (In the first 16 weeks in up to 2% of cases)  
Late failure (Any time after being given the 'all clear' 1:2000)  
Testicular atrophy (Very rare- loss of a testicle due to interruption of blood supply)

Additional risk or consideration:

### Statement of Patient

I agree to the procedure or course of treatment stated on this form. I had the opportunity to discuss the details of the procedure prior to the operation.

**Patient's Signature:** ..... **Date:** .....

**Printed name:** <Patient Name>

### Doctor's Confirmation

I am satisfied that the patient understands what is proposed and is happy to proceed to a vasectomy.

**Clinician's Signature:** ..... **Date:** .....

**Clinician's Printed Name:** .....

### Statement of Interpreter (Where appropriate)

I have interpreted the information above to the patient to the best of my ability and in a way in which I believe he can understand.

**Signed:** ..... **Date:** .....

**Interpreter Printed Name:** .....

# Advice Following Vasectomy

## What do I do when I get home?

Relax with your feet up. Do as much as you feel comfortable to do but it is perhaps better to avoid long periods of standing, walking or heavy lifting for the first couple of days.

## How long does it take for the wound to heal?

This will take 7 to 14 days to heal completely. If you have stitches, these will dissolve within 7 to 14 days. It is very important to keep the wound site clean and dry. Please don't use creams and talcum powder on the area until it has completely healed.

## Will I get any swelling and bruising?

Some swelling and bruising will occur after the operation. Therefore, it is best to wear supportive underpants or briefs for at least 7 to 14 days. If the area is swollen, bruised and uncomfortable, apply a pack of ice wrapped in a towel to the scrotal area for a few minutes at a time whilst lying down. This helps to reduce swelling. Some men can have some bruising around the testicles and it can occasionally spread to the penis and groin area. This should resolve within a week.

## Will I need pain killers?

The local anaesthetic used will gradually wear off in 1-2 hours. We advise that you take some pain killers as soon as you get home.

You can take Paracetamol or Ibuprofen, providing you are not allergic to them. Please don't take aspirin or any medication containing aspirin, e.g. Disprin, as these can cause bleeding.

## What are the possible immediate complications following a vasectomy?

- **Infection**  
If you experience excessive pain, swelling, the wound site is hot to touch or you have flu-like symptoms with or without a temperature, then it is possible that you may have an infection. Please contact us as we can advise you about treatment which may involve a course of antibiotics.
- **Haematoma**  
If you experience some bleeding from the wound site, apply a clean dressing and pinch the edges of the wound together with some pressure for about 20 minutes, by which time the bleeding should have stopped. If it doesn't stop please contact us. In very occasional cases, a small blood vessel inside the scrotal area can start to bleed, causing localised swelling and pain (haematoma). If you develop a large and painful swelling, please contact us as soon as possible.

## When is my semen sample due for testing?

Your sample is due 16 weeks after the operation- see the details above on Qs and As.

**Until we send you a clearance letter, you must use an alternative form of contraception.**

## What if I move house after the operation?

Please let us know of any changes to your address as we will not be able to advise you of the final outcome of your operation.

**Please contact us in the first instance, rather than your own surgery, on 01726 885104 if you have any queries or problems. Phone lines are open Monday to Friday 08:30am – 16:30pm only.**

**If outside of these hours, then please contact NHS 111 on 111. Please note that NHS 111 may refer you on elsewhere if necessary.**

