

Are you thinking about having a vasectomy?

Vasectomy is birth control for men that's permanent. It's quick, safe, and almost 100% effective. Vasectomy is difficult to reverse. Make sure it's the right choice for you and your partner. If you think you might want children in the future, you and your partner can use reversible methods of birth control instead, like birth control pills and condoms. A vasectomy is usually done in our clinic and takes about 30 minutes.

We encourage you to seriously think about your decision to have a vasectomy. As you go through our education steps, you'll be given many opportunities to make sure that vasectomy is right for you. It's a good idea to involve your partner in the decision process.

For women, there's a permanent birth control procedure, called tubal ligation. But vasectomy for men is safer, simpler, and less expensive.

Reasons you might want a vasectomy are that you're positive you don't want any children in the future. Even if your partner does. It's a health risk for your partner to become pregnant. You have a medical condition you don't want to pass on to your children. Or you and your partner don't want to use other birth control methods. A vasectomy might not be the right decision if you may want children in the future, or if you feel pressured to have one, are young and might regret it, or if you're not in a stable relationship. Think carefully about your decision and don't let anyone pressure you.

You might be wondering how vasectomy works. A man's testicles continually make sperm. During sex, sperm travels through tiny tubes, called the vas deferens. Sperm then mixes with fluid to make semen, which is released during ejaculation. If sperm connects with a woman's egg during sex, the woman may become pregnant.

With vasectomy, we cut the tubes that carry the sperm. Then the fluid released during ejaculation no longer contains sperm, so it can't lead to pregnancy.

After a vasectomy, your testicles will keep making sperm but your body will absorb it. A vasectomy won't affect your sex drive. You can still have an orgasm and ejaculate.

A vasectomy also won't change the tone of your voice or your physical appearance, affect your male hormones, or fix any sexual or relationship problems you might be having. A vasectomy won't affect your health. So far, research studies don't show a strong connection between vasectomy and an increased risk of heart disease or prostate cancer.

We do know that a vasectomy won't protect you from getting a sexually transmitted infection or HIV. You should still use a condom.

You might enjoy sex more after a vasectomy because you won't worry about getting a woman pregnant. Or you might regret having a vasectomy if you decide too quickly and then change your mind.

These are the steps will follow during the procedure. First we'll numb the area with local anesthesia to make you more comfortable. You might feel a brief sting when the local anesthesia is given. Next we'll expose the tubes or vas deferens on each side through one or two small openings in the scrotum. We'll then pull the tubes through the openings. After this, we'll carefully cut each tube in half, and then seal the ends so they can't reconnect. Because the area is numb, most men say they have little to no discomfort.

You'll generally go home within a few minutes after the procedure. You'll need to take it easy for a few days after having a vasectomy. You'll probably have some bruising and swelling. You can apply an ice pack, but make sure to cover the ice with a towel so you don't get frostbite.

Take acetaminophen, like Tylenol, and wear scrotal support for a few days. Most men can return to work within two to three days. But if you do strenuous work, you might need more time off.

Your doctor will tell you when you can start having sex again, but you'll still need to use birth control. While vasectomy is usually very effective and permanent, you may still be able to get a woman pregnant. Use birth control until your doctor reviews your post vasectomy semen analysis and tells you that you're safe to stop using it. For most men, sperm usually clear from the system after about 20 ejaculations.

Ask your doctor when you should complete a semen analysis. Remember, it's very important to follow your doctor's instructions and return to the clinic for a post vasectomy semen test.

Any type of surgical procedure can result in complications. Fortunately, serious problems from a vasectomy are rare. Minor problems include soreness, swelling, and bruising that usually gets better without treatment. Serious problems are uncommon, but can include bleeding that needs surgery or an extended healing time, infection, or chronic pain that can't be cured called post vasectomy pain syndrome.

Although it happens less than 1% of the time, the tubes can reconnect, making you fertile again or even resulting in an unplanned pregnancy.

Vasectomy can be reversed, but it's difficult, expensive, and often not successful. Make sure it's the right decision for you before you have the procedure.

Vasectomy is an effective method of birth control, resulting in only one pregnancy per 100 couples per year.

A tubal ligation, which is permanent sterilization for a woman has similar results. Birth control pills, on the other hand, result in about 5 pregnancies per 100 couples in a year, even if used correctly. And using condoms results in about 14 pregnancies for the same number of couples.

Thank you for watching this video. We hope it helps with your decision about having a vasectomy.

After watching this video, please click on the "Appointments" tab on kp.org to schedule a telehealth visit with a Urology clinician to discuss your procedure. You may also call the Contact Center at 404-365-0966 for help with scheduling your visit.