

# Vasectomy

SUNA Postoperative Care Task Force

## Overview

A vasectomy is a procedure offered to men who do not want any more children (permanent sterilization). If you think you might one day change your mind about having children, either put off the surgery until you're sure or consider banking your sperm. Vasectomies can be reversed, but the reversal procedure is expensive and may not work.

## Indications

This is a procedure offered to men who wish to prevent future pregnancies. Vasectomy is an extremely effective form of birth control: only 1 to 2 women in every 1,000 get pregnant after their partners have had a vasectomy.

A vasectomy does not protect against sexually transmitted diseases, however, so use a condom if your sexual relationship is not exclusive.

This surgery is done under local anesthesia most of the time, but it may be necessary for this procedure to be done in the operating room.

## Possible Risks

Every surgery has some risk of infection, but it is rare with this surgery. Any infection is treated on a case-by-case basis. You can expect bruising and scrotal swelling that will start 18 to 24 hours after the surgery, and gradually decrease over the following 1 to 2 weeks.

## What to Expect Before Surgery

- If you start any new medications before your surgery, please contact the urology office as soon as possible to discuss whether the medication may be taken up to and including the day of the surgery.

## Preoperative Instructions

- Plan to wear loose clothing and loose underwear the day of your procedure to help with the post-operative dressing and your comfort level.
- You may eat a light amount of food one (1) hour or more before your procedure, and you can drink fluids up until the time of your surgery.
- You can take your morning medications.
- You should have someone with you for this procedure. If you are going to take oral sedation (such as Valium), you must sign the procedure consent form prior to taking the medication. If you are going to take oral sedation (Valium), a responsible adult companion

must be with you on the date of your procedure. This person must remain in the clinic and be available to staff during your procedure and assist you upon discharge by driving you home with close observation of your condition.

- You may be instructed to shave the entire scrotal sack prior to surgery. You should bring an athletic supporter (jock strap), compression shorts, or tight-fitting underwear to wear home after the procedure.
- Leave all jewelry and valuables at home.

## What to Expect After Your Vasectomy

This is an outpatient procedure. You will be discharged home after the procedure has been completed. Bringing a driver is preferred. You must have someone available to drive you home after your procedure if you are taking oral sedation (Valium).

- There is little discomfort with a vasectomy. The scrotum will be numb, but some men feel a slight “tugging” sensation or a feeling of things moving around.
  - After a vasectomy, it is normal to feel both mild pain and swelling of the scrotum. You may notice a small amount of drainage from the puncture site(s) that can continue for several days. It is ok to cover the area with a gauze pad. You may feel a marble-sized knot above the testicle.
  - One side may heal faster than the other.
  - If there is a stitch in the skin, it will dissolve on its own.

### Acknowledgment

We would like to especially thank the following SUNA members for their valuable contributions to these special focus issues. They either acted as a peer reviewer, author of the educational handouts, or both.

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*We hope you and all your family members may benefit from these handouts.*

- Once you are home, you may shower. You may wash your incisions gently with soap and water and pat dry, do not rub.
- Do not take a bath or use a hot tub for seven (7) days.
- Do not drive any motor vehicle or operate motorized equipment for at least 24 hours after your procedure or while taking narcotic (opioid) pain medications.
- Do not drink alcohol for at least 24 hours after the procedure.
- You may continue your normal diet.
- You may return to work after 24 hours, as long as your job is sedentary and does not involve heavy lifting.
- It is okay to resume having sex after 7 to 10 days, if you are comfortable enough, but you must continue using birth control until we confirm you are sterile by two sperm checks.
- Wear your athletic underwear, compression shorts, jock strap/athletic supporter for the next 72 hours. You can remove it to shower after 24 hours, but then replace it afterwards. Keep the gauze stuffed into supportive underwear, as long as it does not become soiled.
- Do not engage in any activities in the straddle position (bicycle, motorcycle, snow mobile, etc.) for at least 7 days after this procedure.
- You may take Extra-Strength Tylenol, Motrin, or Advil as needed for any pain or discomfort per the instructions on the bottle.
  - Use a combination of Tylenol, ibuprofen, and an ice pack for discomfort. Tylenol and ibuprofen work in different ways to treat pain and should be used TOGETHER to have the best pain control.
  - Use an ice pack or bag of frozen vegetables on the scrotum to help reduce pain and swelling. Apply ice to scrotum for 30 minutes, then remove for 30 minutes, and repeat as needed for the next 2 to 3 days.
- A vasectomy will not affect your sex drive or your ability to have erections and ejaculate.

## When to Call the Clinic

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- Pain that is not relieved by pain medication.
- Continued heavy bleeding or drainage.
- Swelling or redness that is not getting better or gets worse.
- Foul odor.
- Fever over 101 degrees F.

## Post-Vasectomy Semen Check

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A vasectomy does NOT work right away. Until you are told you are sterile, you MUST use another form of birth control. After the procedure, you will be given specimen cups for the post-vasectomy sperm checks. You should provide the sample in the morning of your drop off appointment or the evening before (keep in the refrigerator overnight). We will contact you with a message via your medical record portal or phone call. Please make sure that you provide us with an up-to-date phone number. If we cannot leave a message at that number, please let us know.

You need to do sperm checks per your provider (usually around 6 to 9 and 12 weeks). You will get the OK to stop using birth control after two (2) sperm checks do not see any sperm. If any sperm are seen on the first two checks, additional checks will be necessary.

## Resources

- Quallich, S.A., & Marchese, K. (2020). Special topics for the advanced practice provider in urology. Vasectomy and male birth control. In S.A. Quallich, & M.J. Lajiness (Eds.), *The nurse practitioner in urology* (2nd ed.). Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-45267-4>
- Sharlip, I.D., Belker, A.M., Honig, S., Labrecque, M., Marmar, J.L., Ross, L.S., Sandlow, J.I., Sokal, D.C., & the American Urological Association. (2012; amended 2015). Vasectomy: AUA guideline. *Journal of Urology*, 188(Suppl. 6), 2482-2491. <https://www.auanet.org/guidelines/guidelines/vasectomy-guideline>
- Urology Care Foundation. (2020). *What is a vasectomy?* <https://www.urologyhealth.org/urology-a-z/v/vasectomy>

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