

Your Questions Answered

What is a vasectomy?

Vasectomy is a simple operation which makes a man sterile. A man produces sperm in his testicles. The tubes which carry the sperm from the testicles up to the penis are cut and blocked during the operation so that sperm cannot get into the semen (the fluid released when a man reaches a climax or “comes”).

How does the surgeon carry out the procedure?

The surgeon starts by putting an injection of local anaesthetic into the skin of the scrotum near the tubes. When this has taken effect he will make a small cut in the skin so he can reach the tubes. The surgeon will remove part of each tube, then tie and crush the ends and diathermy (seal close). The incision is so small that it generally needs no stitch and self closes.

Is the local anaesthetic injection painful?

No, it is not painful but it is uncomfortable.

How big is the cut?

The cut is only a few millimetres. It is so small that generally it requires no stitch to close the incision as it closes on its own. When your pubic hair re-grows it will hardly be visible.

I have heard about a no scalpel technique, is that better than cutting the skin?

With the no scalpel technique a pair of special forceps is used to cut the skin. With both methods a small cut in the skin is necessary in order for the tubes to be reached.

How long does the operation take?

The operation takes around 30 minutes, but you will be with us for about an hour.

Are there many complications after the operation?

Significant post operative complications following a vasectomy are very rare, although most men have some scrotal bruising. The following complications are all very rare: bleeding into the scrotum; inflammation or infection of the testicle or tube; pain in the area of the incision or wound problems; the persistent testicular pain; small lumps in the scrotum near the operation site (benign sperm granulomata).

If you have any concerns after your operation please call us on 08700 10 56 56 and arrange for the surgeon or one of our consultant GPs (who are experienced in post operative care for vasectomy patients) to speak to you.

What if I need any medication after my operation?

If you need any medication (such as anti-biotics) following your operation, the WellCare surgeon or doctor will arrange for it to be prescribed and dispensed at WellCare and sent by post directly to you.

Do I need to wear any special clothing after the operation?

You should bring supportive underwear to wear after the operation such as swimming trunks or Y fronts.

Is there anything I can't do after the operation?

You should not drive yourself home after the operation. Do rest for 24 hours after the operation and do not return to work until 2 days after surgery. Do not play sport or lift anything for 7 days.

When can I have sex?

You can have sex when you feel comfortable. But you must use contraception until your surgeon tells you otherwise.

How will I know if the operation was successful?

The way to see if your tubes are clear of sperm is to collect samples of semen and have it tested in the laboratory. Although no new sperm can get past the block in the tubes, there will still be sperm in the tubes past the block. These are shed each time you have intercourse or masturbate to a climax. Most are clear after 24 ejaculations. You need two consecutive clear samples at least one month apart to know that your tubes are free of sperm.

You will collect the first sample four months (16 weeks) and 24 ejaculations after surgery and then collect a second sample one to two months after that. At the time of your operation you will be given instructions on how to collect your samples and how to send them to the laboratory.

What if the sample fails to clear?

Should you need to produce a third or fourth sample to obtain two consecutive clear samples this will be free of charge however, if a fifth or subsequent semen sample is required there will be an additional charge for each sample. If the samples fail to clear within 12 months of the operation you will be advised to consider a further operation, perhaps under general anaesthetic. Even after two clear samples the risk of pregnancy is about 1 in 2000

And finally, is a vasectomy reversible?

It is very difficult and expensive to reverse a vasectomy. WellCare does not offer this service. Because of the finality of the operation we recommend counselling with the surgeon prior to the

operation with at least a week between the counselling and the vasectomy operation in order for you (and your partner) to think carefully before you consent to the operation.

How much does it cost?

The WellCare Vasectomy service £395

To include: pre operative counselling, the vasectomy procedure using local anaesthetic, up to four semen analyses and after care. For more information or to book an appointment please call in confidence our patient service advisers on 01225 312040 (Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.45pm).