INFORMATION ON MALE STERILISATION (Vasectomy)

Please read this leaflet before your operation.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Key Points</th>
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<td>A woman can get pregnant if a man’s sperm reaches one of her eggs. Contraception tries to stop this happening by keeping the egg and sperm apart.</td>
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<td>A vasectomy is a type of contraception for men. The tubes in your scrotum will be cut so that your sperm can not leave your body.</td>
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<tr>
<td>After your vasectomy you will need to take it easy for a few days.</td>
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A **vasectomy** is a *permanent* method of contraception and only suitable for people who are sure they never want children or do not want more children. If you are not sure, alternative contraceptive methods would be more suitable for you and your partner. Please see your GP or go to any sexual health clinic.

A **vasectomy is NOT reversible.** You must assume your operation is permanent. Reversal of vasectomy is often not successful. Even if the two tubes can be rejoined, you may not become fertile again. The NHS does not offer vasectomy reversal.

A **vasectomy is not 100% successful.** After the operation you will need to have a sample of your semen tested to confirm whether the operation has been successful.

- 1 in 100 operations are **not** successful. This is usually because the ends of the tubes (vasa) heal back together. If there are still live sperm in your semen at least 7 months after your operation you may need a repeat operation.
- Later on about 1 man in 2000 will become fertile again despite having had negative semen tests. If your partner ever feels pregnant she should do a pregnancy test.
Vasectomies are generally safe but as with all operations there are a few risks, detailed in the table below. There is no evidence that vasectomy increases the risk of testicular cancer or prostate cancer.

<table>
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<th>Risk</th>
<th>Incidence</th>
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<tr>
<td>Extra bruising or skin infection</td>
<td>1 in 10 operations</td>
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<td>Haematoma or deep infection</td>
<td>1 in 25 operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operation may not be successful</td>
<td>1 in 100 operations</td>
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<td>Return of fertility in the future</td>
<td>1 in 2,000 operations</td>
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<td>Chronic testicular pain</td>
<td>Uncommon</td>
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Preparing for your operation

You will need to arrange time off work: how long depends on your job.
- If you do a desk job it should be possible for you to go back to work after two days
- If you have a heavy job or drive a lot, you should wait at least five days.
- Your HGV insurance may not be valid for seven days after your vasectomy.

5 days before your operation you must remove the hair from the front of your scrotum. You can buy a hair removing (depilatory) cream from your local pharmacy - buy the one for sensitive areas (designed for bikini lines). Some men may have a reaction to the hair removing cream. If you notice any discomfort, wash the cream off immediately. The alternative is trimming the hair on your scrotum with scissors instead. Do not shave as this will increase the risk of infection in the wound.

On the day of your operation

When you arrive for your operation the surgeon will initially confirm all your medical details and ensure you understand the vasectomy procedure and its risks and benefits. You will be asked to sign a consent form to confirm this.
- You will be examined before the operation starts. If any problems are found, your operation may be cancelled. Very occasionally it will not be possible to perform the vasectomy under a local anaesthetic and you may need referral to have the procedure done under a general anaesthetic on a different day.
- After the examination, local anaesthetic will be injected into the skin on the front of the scrotum and into the tubes (vasa) which carry sperm from the testicles to the penis. A small portion of the vasa are removed and the ends of the tubes are sealed via one or two small cuts in the skin on the front of the scrotum. There are usually no stitches in the skin as the skin heals well without them.
- You will feel pressure but not much pain during the operation. You will not be able to see what is happening.
- The operation takes approximately 30 minutes although you will usually be at the unit for at least one hour.
- You can usually go home 10 – 15 minutes after the operation. You must go home with a responsible adult. It is not advised for you to go home alone or by bus. You must not drive for 24 hours after the procedure.
Please make sure you have **tight underpants** to wear afterwards, this will reduce bruising and provide support.

**What to expect following your operation**

You **must**:
- **Rest** for at least 24 hours
- Wear tight underpants or a scrotal support **day and night** for at least 1 week
- Keep the wound clean and dry (but no bathing / showering for at least 24 hours)

You **must not**:
- Drive for 24 hours after the operation
- Drink alcohol for 24 hours after the operation
- Bath or shower for the first 24 hours
- Lift anything heavy for five days
- Drive a HGV for seven days
- Exercise or play sport for two weeks after your operation.

**Pain**: there will usually be some pain when the local anaesthetic wears off. We recommend taking paracetamol or a similar painkiller for this. The pain can last for approximately 1 week.
- Sometimes men can suffer from **chronic testicular pain**, which lasts for a long time (months / years) after vasectomy. It is not uncommon, however, to feel some fullness in the testes for four to six months after a vasectomy.

**Bruising**: you will have some bruising. Sometimes a lot of bruising may occur. This is most likely if you do too much in the first few days. Painkillers should help.
- Occasionally, bleeding under the skin may cause a tender swelling (haematoma).

**Blood in semen**: for the first few ejaculations after the vasectomy this can be normal. If it persists, you should contact the vasectomy service or your own GP.

**Reasons to seek help after your operation**
- Skin becomes red, hot or swollen or the wound starts discharging
- Testicles become tender or swollen
- Enlarging lump within the scrotum, larger than a golf ball

Ring the vasectomy service or surgery where you had your operation done. If they are closed you can see your own GP or your local emergency department.

**Contraception after your vasectomy**

You can have sex after a week – if you feel comfortable. The operation is **not** effective immediately so you **must** continue using your current contraception.
until we have informed you that the operation has been successful. We will only know that the operation has been successful when we know that your semen contains no sperm.

- Your **semen (sperm) test** will need to be done at least 12 weeks and 20 ejaculations after your operation. Instructions for doing this semen sample will be given to you when you come for your operation.
- You must abstain from ejaculation for at least 48 hours before but no longer than 7 days before producing your sample.
- You will be sent a letter after that semen test. Sometimes the results are not straightforward and you may be asked to provide further samples.

**Do not** stop using contraception until you are sent the “all clear” or negative letter.

Your sex life should not be affected in any way through this operation. You will ejaculate as usual and your semen will look the same after the vasectomy. Your hormones and testicles will not change, they will still produce sperm but these will be absorbed by your body. This does not affect your health in any way.

**More information regarding vasectomies can be found on our website:**
[www.letstalkaboutit.nhs.net](http://www.letstalkaboutit.nhs.net) (look in the vasectomy section under the “Contraception” tab)

**FINAL CHECKLIST**

- **Hair removing cream**: buy from a chemist and use five days before the operation.
- **Time off work**: arrange appropriate length of time off work.
- **Arrange for a responsible adult to take you home after the operation**: you will not be able to have the operation if there is no one to accompany you home.
- **Tight pants**: bring along a pair to your operation to wear after.
- **Use contraception until you have received the “all clear” from us.**
- **Semen sample**: do this **no earlier** than 12 weeks after your operation
- **If you do not do the semen tests, you will never know if your operation has been successful.** The ejaculate looks the same after a vasectomy.

**Questions?**

Please telephone us on: 023 9268 0308/0311 (Monday – Friday 8.30 – 2pm)

Please note: missed appointments and cancellations within 3 weeks of the appointment date cost this service and the NHS money and increase the waiting times for other patients. If you fail to attend your appointment or cancel or postpone 2 appointments you will be taken off our waiting list and will be required to return to your GP for another referral.