

Permanent Birth Control: Vasectomy

What is a vasectomy?

- A vasectomy is a medical procedure that makes a body with a penis sterile (unable to create pregnancies).
- A vasectomy is a permanent method of birth control. It works 99.9% of the time.

How does a vasectomy work?

- During a vasectomy, the vas deferens (tubes that carry sperm from the testicles to the penis) are cut and tied or cauterized (sealed with heat).
- After the procedure, sperm made in the testicles cannot get into semen (the fluid that comes out of the penis during ejaculation, sometimes called cum).

How is a vasectomy done?

- A vasectomy can be done in a doctor's office or in a hospital's outpatient department.
- You will get local freezing, similar to the freezing in a dentist's office.
- A doctor makes a small incision(s) (cut) in the scrotum (sack of skin that holds the testicles) to reach the vas deferens.
- The doctor then cuts the vas deferens and ties or cauterizes the ends.
- Sometimes, the doctor does not need to make a cut. Instead, the skin is pierced so that no stitches are needed. This is called "no scalpel" vasectomy.
- This is a day procedure, meaning you will go home the same day.

Are there any risks to a vasectomy?

There is very little risk to sterilization when an experienced doctor performs the procedure. A doctor or health care provider will explain any risks.

Do I have to pay for a vasectomy?

- Manitoba Health covers the base cost of a standard vasectomy.
- A no-scalpel vasectomy performed at a doctor's office, or any additional services, may have a fee. Talk with your health care provider about your options.

How long is the recovery from a vasectomy?

- A vasectomy is a minor procedure.
- You will need to rest with an ice pack for a couple of days.
- You may need to avoid heavy lifting or heavy exercise for about a week.

Does a vasectomy work right away?

No, a vasectomy does not work right away. It may take a few months, because any sperm made before the vasectomy may still be in the vas deferens. While waiting for the vasectomy to work, use other methods of birth control to prevent pregnancy. To confirm the vasectomy worked, your health care provider will:

- Have you provide a sample of semen (cum) to test for sperm. Once sperm is no longer present the procedure has worked.
- Provide instructions on when and how to give these samples.
- Tell you when you are no longer releasing sperm.

How soon can sex happen after a vasectomy?

Your doctor will talk about when sex can resume. Usually, it is about one week after the operation or when you feel comfortable.

Will sex be different after a vasectomy?

- Sex, including orgasms, should feel the same after recovery from a vasectomy.
- The same amount of semen (cum) will ejaculate from your penis, however, it will no longer contain sperm.

Will a vasectomy protect against STIs including HIV?

- No, a vasectomy is only for pregnancy prevention.
- Use safer sex supplies such as condoms and sex dams every time you have sex to reduce the risk of STIs (sexually transmitted infection) or HIV.

Can a vasectomy be undone so I can create a pregnancy in the future?

- A vasectomy is considered a permanent method of birth control.
- Vasectomy reversals may not work, are expensive, and are not covered by the provincial health care plan.
- A vasectomy is not recommended unless you are sure you want this permanent change. If you are unsure, talk with your health care provider about alternative birth control options.

Where can I get a vasectomy?

- Talk with your health care provider for information. They can discuss options and make a referral.
- If you need a regular health care provider, call the Family Doctor Finder at 204-786-7111 or 1-866-6908260, or visit www.gov.mb.ca/health/familydoctorfinder

Where can I get more information?

- From your health care provider, community health clinic, or public health nurse. If you need a regular health care provider, call the Family Doctor Finder at 204-786-7111.
- From the Facts of Life Online: e-mail your questions to thefactsoflife@serc.mb.ca.
- From a Teen Clinic if you are 21 or younger.
- Online at www.serc.mb.ca or our youth website, www.teentalk.ca.