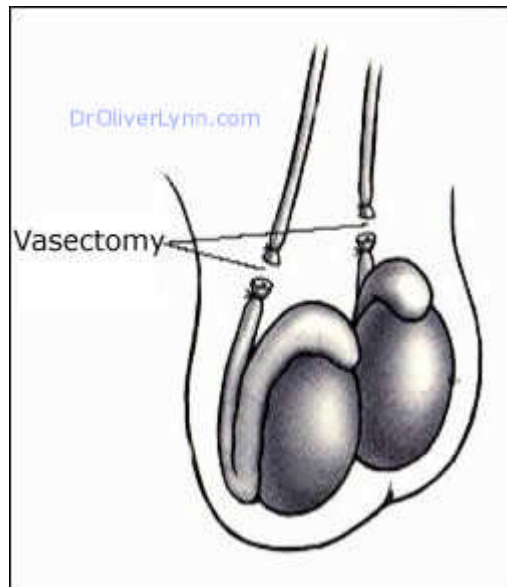


WHAT IS A VASECTOMY?

A simple, safe and permanent form of contraception.

WHAT DOES THE OPERATION ENTAIL?

The vas is the name of the tube which carries the sperm from the testicles to the penis. Vasectomy is an operation in which the vas on each side is cut and the ends sealed. The operation is done through one or two incisions in the scrotum using a local anesthetic, so that the operation is virtually painless.



HOW SOON IS THE OPERATION EFFECTIVE?

The operation is not effective until two consecutive semen tests show complete absence of the sperm. We do the tests at 16 and 18 weeks after the operation. In the meantime you must continue to use reliable contraception.

DO I PRODUCE SPERM AFTER THE OPERATION?

Yes. Sperm is still produced in the testes but instead of going into the seminal fluid they are broken down, reabsorbed and excreted through the blood system, so that when the procedure is complete there is no sperm entering the ejaculate. Essentially ejaculation still takes place as before but there is no sperm in your ejaculate. The volume is virtually the same – it's a bit like the fish are taken out of the river but the river still flows! As far as intercourse is concerned it is exactly the same for both partners.

DO I STILL PRODUCE HORMONES AFTER IT?

Yes, The testicles continue to produce hormones and you can resume sexual intercourse as soon as you are comfortable after the operation provided you use reliable contraception until your tests show a complete absence of sperm.

IS IT REVERSIBLE?

When making the decision the husband and wife must consider the operation to be irreversible.

Although it can be reversed there is no guarantee that it would work, even if it is surgically reversed.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS:

Most people experience discomfort and bruising of the scrotum for a short time after the operation. In about 1 in 40 cases a more severe swelling may occur, which could result in time off work.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF VASECTOMY?

- It is a simple and quick operation.
- Sterilisation is permanent.
- No short or long term serious side effects.
- Lifetime failure is about 1 in 2000 which in Family Planning terms is about as good as it gets.
- Once the operation has worked you do not have to think about contraception.

WHAT ARE THE DISADVANTAGES?

The lag time between the operation and the absence of sperm which usually can be up to 3 or 4 months, but may be longer. However with semen analysis we can confirm this and it gives us a chance to "quality control" the whole procedure. Contraception must be used until the semen test shows that no sperm can be seen.

DR LYNN'S COMMENTS.

This method should not be chosen if there is any doubt! Counselling, full information and full understanding of the procedure is important prior to getting it done. Pain and discomfort for a short time afterwards is common and it is important to rest and avoid strenuous activity for a week or two after the procedure. Most people experience discomfort and bruising of the scrotum for a short while after the operation. In about 1 in 40 cases a more severe swelling may occur which can result in time off work.

CONSENT:

Ideally both partners should be counselled beforehand. This can be done in the surgery some weeks prior to the operation.

Pre-Vasectomy Instructions

Have a bath the night before.

Shave the scrotum and all pubic hair completely.

Bring along a tight pair of underpants.

(Swimming togs are ideal for this).

Post Vasectomy Instructions

- 1.** No bath or shower for three days, then have a bath every night for seven nights with a fistful of salt in it.
- 2.** Pain or discomfort when local anaesthetic wears off can be treated with "Panadol" – 2 tablets every 4 to 6 hours.
- 3.** You must take it as easy as possible for 24 hours i.e. not be on your feet for more than 30 minutes at a time.
- 4.** Relations may be resumed as soon as is comfortable.
- 5.** You must continue to use another reliable method of family planning until your sperm counts show that you are clear. I will write to you when two sperm count reports have been received.
- 6.** Should bleeding or swelling be profuse you should apply a packet of frozen peas to the scrotum for 30 – 60 minutes.

If you have any further problems please do not hesitate to contact me, your own doctor, or your nearest casualty department.