

INFORMATION ON MALE STERILISATION

Vasectomy

Please read this leaflet before your operation. Keep it in a safe place, as you may need the information later.

Solent Vasectomy Service
Sexual Health Service
2nd Floor,
St Mary's Community Health Campus
Milton Road, Portsmouth
PO3 6AD

Telephone: 0300 123 3931
Monday to Friday: 8:30am - 2pm

If you cannot make any appointment, need to change your appointment or have any questions, please telephone us

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 2 appointments you will be taken off our waiting list and will be required to return to your GP for another referral.

 Accessible Information	Key Points
	<p>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.</p>
	<p>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.</p>
	<p>After your vasectomy you will need to take it easy for a few days.</p>
	<p>If you would like to have a vasectomy you have to be referred by your GP. <i>We do NOT accept self referrals.</i></p> <p>Once you have been referred, if you would like to talk to us you can telephone 0300 123 3931</p>

What is a vasectomy?

Vasectomy is the method of male sterilisation. Sterilisation is a **permanent** method of contraception, suitable for people who are sure they never want children or do not want more children.

A small portion of the tubes (vasa), which carry sperm from the testicles to the penis, are removed and the ends of the tubes are sealed.

Alternative contraceptive methods

There are other **long acting reversible** methods of contraception that have very low failure rates that women can use. These include the new copper coils (IUD), the progestogen coil (IUS), the progestogen injection and the progestogen implant. If you want to know more about these alternatives please see your GP or go to any sexual health clinic.

Your sex life

Your sex life should not be affected in any way through this operation. Your hormones will not change. You will ejaculate as usual and your semen will look the same after the vasectomy. The 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.

Is a vasectomy reversible?

NO. 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 free vasectomy reversal.

Failure rate

After the operation you will need to have at least one sample of your semen tested to confirm whether the operation has been successful.

Up to 1 in 100 vasectomy 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 vasectomy, you may need a repeat operation.

Rarely (about 1 man in 2,000) the operation fails some years later, despite having had negative sperm tests. If your partner ever feels pregnant she should do a pregnancy test.

Booking a vasectomy

If you feel that a vasectomy is the right thing for you, you must ask your GP to refer you to us. We do **not** accept self referrals.

What happens once you have been referred?

You will be sent details about how you can access and fill in an **online vasectomy questionnaire**. This is a detailed questionnaire regarding your past medical history and highlights the benefits and risks of a vasectomy operation.

- Please complete this questionnaire as soon as you can after your referral.
- Remember to press "submit" at the end.
- If you are unable to access the internet or anticipate any difficulties with completing the questionnaire yourself, please contact us as soon as you can and we can arrange for someone to go through the questionnaire with you.
- If you require further information about anything you can request us to call you back.
- After you have filled in your questionnaire, it will be reviewed by a member of the

vasectomy team.

At the time of referral, all men will be given a **telephone consultation appointment** with a member of our vasectomy team.

- You must **not** be driving at the time of this initial telephone call.
- Please have your diary and a pen and paper handy so that we can arrange and you can record your operation date and time.
- You may ask any questions you have at this time.
- **PLEASE NOTE** – when we telephone you our number should appear as 023 810 32800
- Please ensure you answer your telephone at your dedicated appointment time. If you fail to answer at your appointment time, you will be removed from our waiting list and have to return to your GP.

Routine **sexual health screening** is recommended for all sexually active people. Many infections do not cause any symptoms but any undiagnosed infections can increase the risk of post – operative infection. Therefore all men will be offered an STI testing kit- this can be sent to your home address and you can take the relevant samples at home and post them back to be tested. Your results will be texted through to your mobile phone.

Your vasectomy operation

We carry out vasectomies at a variety of sites within Hampshire both within the sexual health clinics and in GP surgeries. At the end of your telephone consultation appointment you can choose where you would like to have your operation done. All our surgeons have been specifically trained to carry out vasectomies under local anaesthesia and have appropriate qualifications and experience.

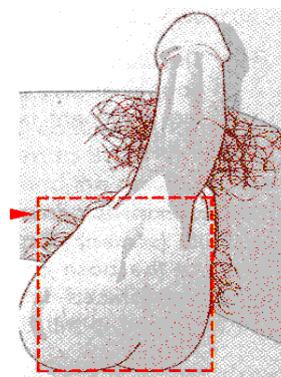
Preparing for your operation

Trim the hairs on the front of your scrotum as shown in the diagram.

- Shaving is not recommended as it may increase the risk of infection in the wound.

Please **shower or bathe with soap**, on the day of your operation (or the day before your operation). This helps reduce the risk of infection.

Please eat and drink normally on the day of your operation.



On the day of your operation

What happens at 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 vasa. This can be a little painful for some men but this should only last a minute or so. The vasa are then divided and 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.

After the local anaesthetic starts to work you should not feel pain during the operation but you may feel pressure. You will not be able to see the operation.

The operation takes approximately 30 minutes although you will usually be at the unit for at least one hour.

Immediately after the operation

You are usually ready to 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.

You should:

- **Rest** for 24 hours
- Wear tight underpants or a scrotal support **day and night** for at least 72 hours
- After the first 24 hours have a bath or shower daily.

You should **not**:

- Drive for 24 hours after the operation
- Drink alcohol for 24 hours after the operation
- Bath for the first 24 hours
- Lift anything heavy for five days
- Drive a HGV for seven days
- Play sport for two weeks after your operation.

Complications

Pain

There will usually be some pain when the local anaesthetic wears off (after about two hours). We

recommend taking Paracetamol or ibuprofen (if you are able to take this). The pain will last for approximately three to five days.

Some men feel some fullness in the testes for four to six months after a vasectomy. This is normal.

Rarely men can suffer from **chronic testicular pain**, which lasts for a long time after 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 and / or an ice pack (wrapped in a towel) should help.

Occasionally, bleeding under the skin may cause a tender swelling (haematoma). If you are concerned ring the vasectomy service or your GP.

Infection

Infection is possible after a vasectomy. If the skin becomes red, hot or swollen or the wound starts discharging, or the testicles become tender or swollen you may have an infection. Ring the vasectomy service or see your GP as soon as possible for treatment.

Testicular cancer and prostate cancer

There is no evidence that vasectomy increases the risk of testicular cancer or prostate cancer. All men are advised to check their testicles regularly and if you ever notice any swelling of your testicles, lumps in the scrotum or difficulty in passing urine, you should see your GP.

Blood in semen

You may notice some blood in your semen for the first few ejaculations after the vasectomy. This is normal. If it persists, you should contact the vasectomy service or your own GP.

Risks

Vasectomies are generally safe but as with all operations there are a few risks, detailed in the table below

Pain, bleeding, bruising, swelling, haematoma, infection
Operation may not be successful - up to 1 in 100
Return of fertility in the future - 1 in 2,000
Sperm granuloma- small collection of sperm around the site of vasectomy which can be painful - rare
Testicular atrophy – damage to the blood supply to the testis may cause the testis to shrink – very rare
Chronic post vasectomy pain (chronic testicular pain) - uncommon

Arranging time off work

You **must** rest for at least 24 hours after the operation. How long you should have off work 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
 - please speak to your employer

Contraception after your vasectomy

You can have sex after a week – if you feel comfortable. However 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 only know that the operation has been successful when we know that your semen contains no sperm.

Semen (sperm) tests

You will need to produce your first semen sample at least 16 weeks *and* 30 ejaculations after your operation. Instructions on how to do this sample will be given to you when you come for your operation – usually you will be asked to produce a semen sample at home which you will post to the lab for testing.

- You must abstain from ejaculation for at least 48 hours, before but no longer than 7 days before producing your sample.

If there are still sperm in your semen at the first test, then you will be asked to provide further semen samples (every 6 weeks), until your semen becomes free of sperm.

If there are still sperm seen at least 7 months after your vasectomy operation, you may be asked to produce a sample of your semen at Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth to be tested within 1 hour of production.

If there are still *live* sperm in your semen at least 7 months after your vasectomy, we know that your vasectomy will have failed. We know that this happens in up to 1 in 100 vasectomy operations usually because the ends of the tubes (vasa) heal back together. In this scenario we will offer you a repeat operation.

Sometimes the semen test results are not straightforward. For more information regarding semen analysis please see our information sheet on semen analysis on our website:

<https://www.letstalkaboutit.nhs.uk/contraception/vasectomy-services/>

Results

You should receive your result ***by letter*** within 4 weeks of your semen sample. If you have not heard from the vasectomy service within 4 weeks, please contact the office on 0300 123 3931

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

If you do not do the semen test, you will never know if your operation has been successful.
The ejaculate looks the same after a vasectomy.

Further information

Further information can be found on our website: www.letstalkaboutit.nhs.net

(look in the vasectomy section under the “Contraception” tab)

Final checklist

- **Online questionnaire:** you will be sent details of how to access this with your login and password. Please complete this questionnaire asap after your referral.
- **Telephone consultation appointment:** *please answer your phone at your appointment time*
 - you should be in a private place at the time of your call where you will not be disturbed.
 - You **must not** be driving.
- **Trim the hair from the front of your scrotum** before your operation
- **Shower or bathe** with soap on the day of your 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.
- **Complications:** if you develop any problems after the operation please contact the vasectomy service or your own GP. If you do have to see your GP regarding a problem, please let the service know so we can monitor our complication rate.
- **Use contraception until you have received the “all clear” from us.**
- **Semen sample:** do this **no earlier** than 16 weeks after your operation. Abstain from sex / masturbation for at least 48 hours before but no longer than seven days before producing your sample.
- **REMEMBER - 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.

If you cannot make any appointment, need to change your appointment or have any questions, please telephone us

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 2 appointments you will be taken off our waiting list and will be required to return to your GP for another referral.

Please note: To be entitled to a vasectomy in this service you must be ordinarily resident in the UK.