

NHS Forth Valley

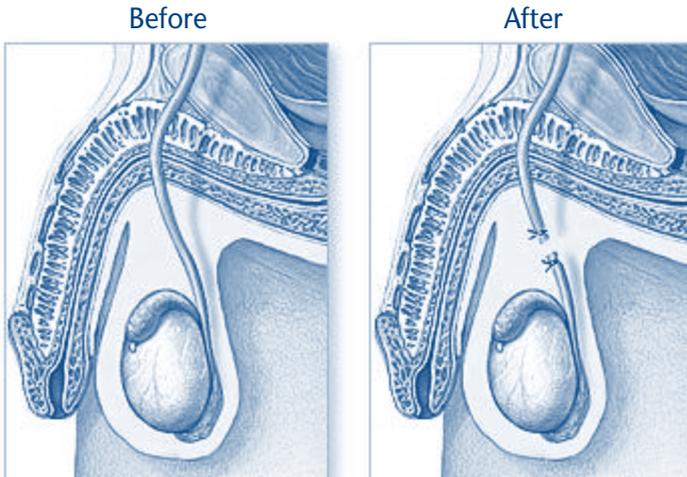
Vasectomy

Patient Information



Information for patients

Vasectomy involves cutting the tubes (the 'vas') that take sperm from the testes to the penis. It is usually the most reliable form of contraception but cannot absolutely guarantee success. However, it is successful for more than 99 out of every 100 men.



As some sperm are stored above the point at which the vas is divided it is not immediately effective. It can take up to 20-30 ejaculations before these sperm are cleared. *You should therefore continue to use some other form of contraception until you have received clearance from the hospital.*

Before you leave the hospital after your operation you will be given a bottle and form for providing a semen specimen. This should be produced 16 weeks after the procedure (and after at least 10 ejaculations). The specimen must be as fresh as possible and should be produced a maximum of two hours before delivery to the hospital.

You will be contacted once your specimen has been examined and told whether it is safe to discontinue contraception. *Do not presume this is the case until you have been contacted.* In rare cases one or two more specimens may be needed before sterility can be confirmed.

The ends of the vas do have a natural tendency to try and join up again after being cut. This means there is a very small chance of becoming fertile again some months or even years after a successful procedure. This can occasionally result in an unexpected pregnancy. The risk of this is estimated at around 1 in every 3000 cases.

A vasectomy must be regarded as irreversible. Although it is technically possible to reverse a vasectomy, this is not available on the NHS. It may be done privately but is expensive and has no guarantee of success.

Medication

Please take all of your normal medications on the day of the operation with the exception of warfarin, aspirin, clopidogrel, persantin, rivaroxaban or any other blood thinning medication.

If you take warfarin, please attend 30 minutes earlier than your appointment on the appointment letter to allow your INR to be checked to ensure you are fit to proceed with the local anaesthetic procedure.

It is essential that you follow the instructions above to ensure that your procedure goes ahead safely and as planned.

What to expect on admission

You do not need to shave yourself before attending for the procedure.

A vasectomy is normally performed under local anaesthetic and takes 20-30 minutes. (If the surgeon cannot feel the vas properly you may instead be referred for a general anaesthetic procedure.)

You will be treated as a day case and be allowed home one to two hours after the procedure. Although it is not essential to take time off work it is often a good idea to take one or two days off, especially if your job is a heavy one.

Driving

You should arrange for someone to accompany you home, and you should not drive yourself.

What to expect during the procedure

The skin of the scrotum and the vas will be numbed with a local anaesthetic injection before the procedure. This is usually uncomfortable, but after this you should feel no pain. If you do, please tell the surgeon who can then give more anaesthetic.

You may still feel a pulling sensation as the surgeon picks up the vas to tie it. This is quite normal but can make some men feel slightly sick, sweaty or light-headed.

At the end of the procedure the wounds are closed with one or two dissolving stitches. They do not need to be removed as they are absorbed by the body.

What to expect after the procedure

The local anaesthetic will wear off after a few hours and your wounds may ache for 24-72 hours. This can usually be relieved with simple painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen.

Some swelling or bruising at the operation site is normal and usually lasts several days. Wearing supportive underpants or swimming trunks can help minimise this. You may also get a small amount of fluid seeping from the wound.

You should keep the area dry for 24 hours after surgery. After this showering is recommended as a hot bath can encourage bleeding or swelling at the operation site.

You may resume intercourse using other contraceptive precautions as soon as you are comfortable. Please remember vasectomy only prevents you getting your partner pregnant. It does not protect you, or them, from getting or passing on sexually acquired infections.

If you develop a temperature, increased redness, throbbing or drainage at the site of the operation, please contact your GP.

Complications following vasectomy

Problems after vasectomy are rare, but as with any surgical procedure, are possible and can delay recovery.

- *Bruising:* A small amount of bruising is normal. Very rarely severe bruising can occur and may require further surgery.
- *Infection:* Some infection of the wound or the testis itself is possible. This can require antibiotic treatment, or very rarely surgery.
- *Pain:* Some discomfort following the procedure is normal. It is recognised that some men may get chronic scrotal discomfort some months or years later as a result of their vasectomy.
- *Failure:* As already mentioned, sterilisation cannot be absolutely guaranteed. Early failure rates are less than 1% and may require a repeat operation. Late failure, where the vas ends rejoin naturally after an initially successful procedure, can occur. This can restore fertility and may result in pregnancy. This occurs in around 1 in 3000 cases.

There is no evidence that vasectomy is associated with any significant health risks.

Contacts

If you have any questions re medication not answered on this leaflet, please contact:

Claire Rodger	01324 566350
Susan Anderson	01324 566345
Morven Johnson	01324 566344

If you have any questions about the procedure, please contact:

01324 567535

Patient Appointments/Cancellations

If you have an enquiry about an appointment or would like to cancel it, please call 01324 566249 or email: FV-UHB.RTT@nhs.net

If you can't go let us know!

Every month around 2,000 people across Forth Valley fail to turn up for hospital appointments. This costs the NHS millions of pounds each year and increases waiting times. So if you are unable to attend or no longer require your hospital appointment please let us know so we can offer it to someone else.

We are happy to consider requests for this publication in other languages or formats such as large print. Please call 01324 590886 (24hrs), fax 01324 590867 or email FV-UHB.disabilitydepartment@nhs.net

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This includes corridors, doorways, car parks and any of our grounds. If you do smoke on NHS premises you may be liable to prosecution and a fine.



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