

Vasectomy

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A vasectomy is a minor surgery that makes you unable to father children.

The doctor removes a piece of each vas deferens and stitches the ends. Vas deferens are long tubes that carry sperm to your penis. The tubes are located in your scrotum.

A vasectomy is considered a permanent form of birth control. The surgery works almost every time. Fewer than one of out of 500 men who have had this surgery will still be able to father children. A vasectomy can be reversed but success rates of pregnancies vary.

A vasectomy will not interfere with your sex life. It does not change either your hormone levels or your ability to have an erection.

Before the Surgery

- Avoid taking aspirin, ibuprofen or other anti-inflammatory medicines 10 days before surgery. They may cause bleeding after the vasectomy.
- Follow your doctor's instructions if you are to shave your scrotum.
- Bring snug-fitting underwear to the appointment to wear when you are ready to leave.

During the Surgery

- Your doctor will inject a numbing medicine into your scrotum. You will have one or two injections.

- The numbing medicine will keep you from feeling any pain.
- If you were not told to shave your scrotum, the full area will be shaved.
- Your doctor will make two small incisions in your upper scrotum.
- Your doctor will cut and remove a portion of the vas deferens and seal each tube end with cautery and/or stitches. (The stitches will dissolve and fall out on their own in about 1 week.) Your doctor may use titanium clips that do not fall out.
- You may feel some movement and tugging. The surgery should not be uncomfortable.
- The surgery takes up to 45 minutes.

After the Surgery

- Your genital area will be sensitive and sore for a few days. To reduce discomfort:
 - You may wear snug-fitting underwear or a scrotal support.
 - You may apply an ice pack (wrapped in a tea towel) for 20 minutes at a time.
 - You may take acetaminophen (Tylenol®). Follow package directions.
 - If your doctor prescribed pain medicine, take it as directed.
- Avoid heavy lifting, twisting or bending for 7 to 10 days.
- You should be ready to go back to work in 3 days.
- Avoid having sex for 7 days.

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Vasectomy Effectiveness

A vasectomy will not prevent pregnancy right away. It takes about 3 to 4 months (or about 15 ejaculations) to empty the leftover sperm which could still cause pregnancy.

You will receive information on testing your semen to make sure it is free of sperm. Before this test, you and your partner will need to use another form of birth control.

Surgery Risks

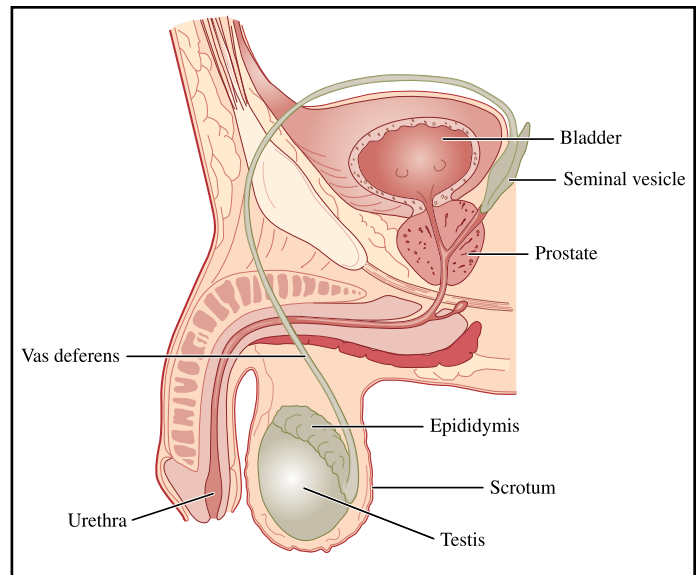
The following are possible complications you may have after the vasectomy.

- You may get an infection.
- You may feel some moderate pain for a few days.
- You may feel lots of pain if there is a slow leak of blood in your scrotum. If this happens, part of your scrotum can become swollen, firm and tender. This happens in about one in 20 cases, and more rarely may require additional surgery.
- You may get a sperm granuloma. This is a nodule (about the size of a pea) that forms at the end of the cut tube. It is your body's immune system reaction to the cut. It does not cause problems.

The following are rare complications.

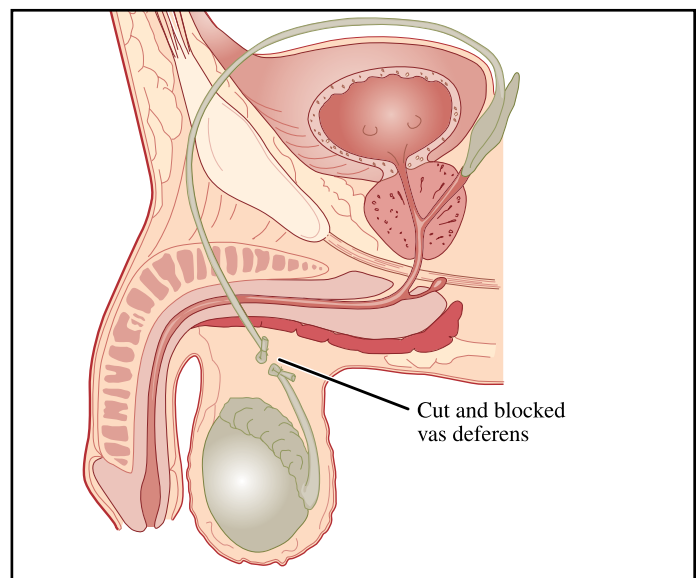
- Your cut tube ends may grow back together. This is called recanalization. This causes fewer than one in 1,000 pregnancies.
- Sexual problems such as lack of interest or erection problems affect less than one-half of one percent of men who have had vasectomies. There are no physical or medical reasons why vasectomy should cause any negative effects on your sex life.

There is no medical evidence that shows any link between vasectomy and prostate cancer. A vasectomy is a safe, effective and permanent birth control method.



Drawings © Allina Health System

The male anatomy before the vasectomy.



The doctor will cut and remove a portion of the vas deferens and seal each tube end.