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Vasectomy Patient Information

Please read this information leaflet carefully

INDEPENDENT HEALTH GROUP

ihg.org.uk

This leaflet contains information that we believe may be helpful for you. However, what is important to one person may be different for another, and you may have questions about how the information applies to you. Please ask us as many questions as you need – we are here to help.

What is a vasectomy?

A vasectomy is a permanent method of male contraception.
The procedure works by blocking the vas deferens (the tubes that carry sperm from the testicles). This prevents sperm from mixing with semen during ejaculation.

Vasectomy is one of the most effective forms of contraception available. However, it should only be considered if you are certain that you do not want any more children in the future.

Important
Although vasectomy reversal may sometimes be possible, it is not always successful and is not routinely available on the NHS.

Are there alternatives to vasectomy?

Before choosing a vasectomy, it is important to consider other highly effective methods of contraception.

For female partners, long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) options include:

- Hormonal implants
- Intrauterine devices (IUD/ coil)
- Intrauterine systems (IUS/ hormonal coil)

These methods are highly effective and can be removed if circumstances change.

An IUS (hormonal coil) can also help manage:

- Heavy periods
- Irregular bleeding
- Some symptoms associated with menopause when used alongside HRT

If you would like to discuss alternative contraceptive options, please speak to your healthcare professional.

How is a vasectomy performed?

We use a minimally invasive vasectomy technique.

The procedure is carried out using a local anaesthetic to numb the area.

During the procedure:

1. A small area of skin on the scrotum is numbed.
2. A tiny opening is made in the skin.
3. The vas deferens are identified.
4. The tubes are sealed and divided.
5. The opening usually heals naturally without stitches.

The procedure itself usually takes between 10 and 20 minutes.

Our aim is to make the experience as comfortable and straightforward as possible.

Will a vasectomy affect my sex life?

There is no physical reason for your libido or sex life to be affected. Most couples would not notice a difference.

However, some couples may report their sex life being adversely affected while others may feel it is improved because they no longer need to worry about an unplanned pregnancy.

What happens to sperm after a vasectomy?

Sperm can only be seen under a microscope.

After a vasectomy, sperm will continue to be produced naturally by the testicles. However, they can no longer travel through the blocked tubes.

The sperm are gradually broken down and absorbed harmlessly by the body.

Will my semen look different?

No.
Semen is produced by the prostate gland and seminal vesicles.

A vasectomy does not affect the production or ejaculation of semen; but it won't contain microscopic sperm.

Does a vasectomy work immediately?

No.
After the procedure, some sperm remain in the tubes beyond the point where the vas deferens have been sealed.

It takes a few months for these sperm to clear and for the tubes to become fully sealed.

Important
You must continue to use contraception until you have been told that your vasectomy has been successful.

Stopping contraception too soon could result in pregnancy.

How effective is a vasectomy?

Vasectomy is one of the most effective methods of contraception available.

However:

- Around 1 in 200 vasectomies will not be successful.
- You will need to provide at least one semen sample for testing.
- Some patients will need to provide additional samples before success can be confirmed.

Important

Do not stop using contraception until you have been contacted and advised that your vasectomy has been successful.

Is there still a risk of pregnancy after a successful vasectomy?

A successful vasectomy significantly reduces the risk of pregnancy.

However, no contraceptive method is 100% effective.
There remains a very small ongoing risk, estimated at approximately 1 in 2,000, that fertility could return in the future.

This happens because, very rarely, the ends of the vas deferens can naturally reconnect.

Pre-procedure Information

Before Your Appointment

Please make sure you:

□ Eat and drink normally before attending your appointment. It is important you are well hydrated and have had something substantial to eat.

□ Have a bath or shower and wash the genital area thoroughly with soap and warm water immediately before your appointment. This reduces your risk of infection.
□ Wear supportive, tight-fitting underwear on the day of your procedure.
□ Arrange for someone to take you home after your vasectomy.
□ Ensure you have pain relief available at home (for example paracetamol, co-codamol if suitable, and ibuprofen if you are able to take it).

Please do not:
☒ Shave or trim hair in the genital area before your appointment.
☒ Arrive without eating or drinking.
☒ Drive yourself home after the procedure. Your insurance would be invalid.

How long will I be at the clinic?

- Your appointment will usually last 30 to 45 minutes.
- The vasectomy procedure itself normally takes 10 to 20 minutes.

Possible Risks and Complications

All surgical procedures carry some risk. Most men recover without any problems.

Common Side Effects

Bruising, Swelling and Discomfort

It is normal to experience:

- Mild to moderate discomfort
- Bruising around the scrotum
- Some swelling

These symptoms usually improve over the first one to two weeks.

Possible Risks and Complications

All surgical procedures carry some risk. Most men recover without any problems.

Infection

A small number of patients develop an infection after the procedure.

Signs of infection include:

- Increasing redness
- Increasing pain
- Green or yellow discharge
- Fever or flu-like symptoms

If you experience any of these symptoms, please contact us for advice.

Sperm Granuloma

A sperm granuloma is a small lump that can develop at the cut end of the vas deferens.

- These are relatively common.
- Most settle without treatment.
- Rarely they become painful and require further surgical treatment.

Haematoma (Bleeding Inside the Scrotum)

Occasionally bleeding can occur inside the scrotum after surgery.

This may cause:

- Significant swelling
- Bruising
- Pain

Most haematomas settle on their own, but rarely require further surgery in hospital.

Chronic Post-Vasectomy Pain

A small number of men experience long-term pain after vasectomy.

- Some published guidelines estimate that between 1 in 50 to 1 in 100 men will have on going chronic pain that is severe enough to affect their quality of life following a vasectomy.
- Recent data however suggests the risk of chronic pain is around 1 in 500 patients and this is more in line with our own experience.

If you are currently or have previously been troubled by pain in the testicles, or any chronic pain conditions then please give us a call to discuss this further. The chance of you having chronic pain after a vasectomy may will be higher.

There is a very rare risk of testicular damage and the need for a testicle to be removed after a vasectomy.

Important

If you have concerns after your procedure, please contact our team first rather than your GP whenever possible.

Post-Vasectomy Care

What To Do:

On the Day

✔ Rest quietly at home.
✔ Take regular pain relief as advised.
✔ Wear supportive underwear.
✔ Keep the scrotum dry.
✔ Drink plenty of fluids.

During Recovery

✔ Take 2 to 3 days off office-based work.
✔ Take longer off work if your role involves heavy lifting or manual labour.
✔ You can shower from the following day, taking care to keep the scrotum dry.
✔ Continue wearing supportive underwear for comfort.
✔ Continue to take regular pain relief for the first few days at least.

Pain Relief

You may take:

- Paracetamol
- Co-codamol (if suitable)
- Ibuprofen (if suitable)

Important

Do not take paracetamol and co-codamol together, as co-codamol already contains paracetamol.
Do not take aspirin as it may increase bleeding.

What To Expect

It is normal to experience:

- Bruising
- Swelling

- Mild to moderate discomfort
- A small amount of blood staining on the dressing
- Small amounts of straw-coloured fluid from the wound
- Occasional blood staining in semen for several weeks

Most symptoms improve within one to two weeks.

Avoid For 10 Days

✘ Sexual activity.
✘ Heavy exercise.
✘ Heavy lifting.
✘ Excessive physical exertion.
✘ Alcohol for the first 24 hours.

When To Seek Advice

Please contact us if you develop:

- Increasing pain
- Significant swelling
- Persistent bleeding
- A temperature
- Redness spreading around the wound
- Green or yellow discharge
- Any symptoms that concern you

Outside our opening hours, contact NHS 111. In an emergency call 999.

Semen Sample Testing

Step 1: Wait for Our Letter

Approximately 4 months after your vasectomy, we will write to you requesting your first semen sample.

Please do not send a sample before receiving this letter.

Step 2: Continue Using Contraception
Important
Continue using your usual method of contraception until we confirm your vasectomy has been successful.

Even after the procedure:

- Live sperm may remain in the tubes.
- The tubes take a few months to seal completely.
- Around 1 in 200 vasectomies are not successful.

Step 3: Produce Your Sample
Samples must be collected by:
✔Masturbation

Please do not use:
✘ Condoms
✘ Withdrawal methods

These may affect the accuracy of the test.

Step 4: Label and Return the Sample
When we write to you, we will provide:

- A sample pot
- A label
- A request form
- Instructions for returning the sample

Both the label and form must be completed.

Step 5: Await Your Result

We will usually contact you around one week after your sample has been tested.

You may need:

- One sample only, or
- Further samples if sperm are still present.

Important: Contraception Reminder

A vasectomy does not work immediately.

You must continue to use your normal method of contraception until:

✔️You have submitted the required semen sample(s).
✔️The results have been reviewed.
✔️We have confirmed that your vasectomy has been successful.

Stopping contraception too early could result in pregnancy.

Feedback or Complaints

At Independent Health Group, we strive to provide a service that meets the expectations of all our patients. We recognise that, on occasion, patients may wish to raise concerns about the care or service they have received.

If you would like to make a complaint or raise a concern in person, please speak to any member of staff.

If your concern cannot be resolved immediately, we will follow our formal complaints procedure and provide you with a written response.

Please make your complaint to:

Head of Quality and Governance
Independent Health Group
8 The Office Village
Bath Business Park
Peasedown St. John
BA2 8SG

Email: inhg.qandg@nhs.net
Tel: 03330 100 362

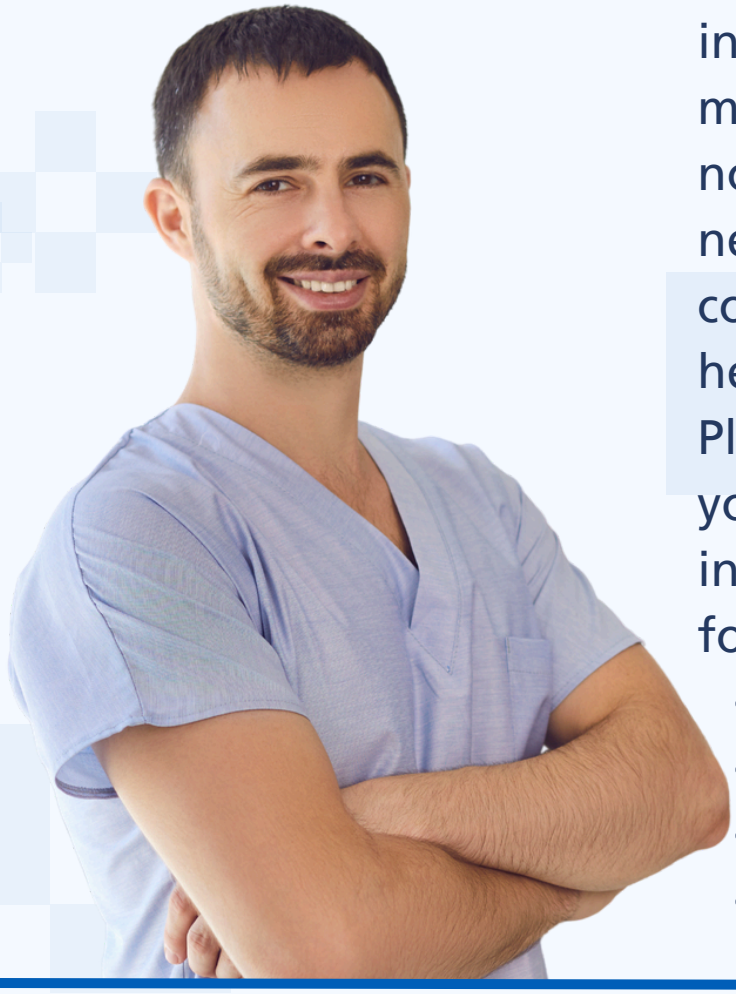
A full copy of the Independent Health Group Management of Complaints and Concerns Policy is available on request from the Head of Quality and Governance.

Contact Details

For general enquiries you can call us on 03330 100362
Monday to Friday, 8am–5pm.
Alternatively, you can complete our online enquiries form and a member of our team will be in touch.

Further Information

NHS Website
This website has lots of useful information about vasectomies.
Website



We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please contact us, we are happy to help.
Please also let us know if you would like this information in another format. Such as:

- Easy Read
- Large Print
- Audio
- Another Language