

## Information sheet for patients having a vasectomy (male sterilization)

Please discuss with your GP about other methods of contraception so that you are aware of all your options. If you have decided you want to be sterilised, please read the information below as well as the contents of the consent form before your appointment.

### BEFORE THE OPERATION

- If you have had any operations of the scrotum/testes even as a child, please call us. You may require an assessment first before we can book in for our one stop clinic.
- Please trim or shave the hair around the scrotum (under the penis) on the morning of the operation.
- Please have a light meal on the day of the procedure. You should not eat heavily beforehand, nor drink alcohol on that day.
- You will need to wear well-fitting and supportive underpants or swimming trunks (ie not loose boxers) after the procedure for several days.
- Your appointment will include an examination of the scrotum, counselling and consent, followed immediately by your operation and the postoperative advice. Your overall visit at the centre is about 45 minutes.
- Occasionally it may not be possible to perform the procedure under local anaesthetic. This may be because it is not possible to mobilise the tubes (vas deferens) to the surface of the skin or a medical concern. You might then be offered referral to a hospital to have the operation done under general anaesthetic if you wish.
- We would advise you have someone drive you home after the procedure, as some car insurance policies may not cover you after an operation.

### THE OPERATION

- A small amount of local anaesthetic is used to numb an area in the scrotal skin using a very fine needle, and once numb, more anaesthetic is infiltrated deeper around the vas (tube carrying the sperm).
- The operation consists of removing a piece of the vas through a tiny incision in the scrotal skin and cauterizing the ends using diathermy.
- The procedure is then repeated on the other side.
- In most cases, only one incision is required. We prefer to use a couple of dissolvable stitches to close the wound, although this is not always necessary. It takes about 2 weeks for the stitches to dissolve.

### AFTER THE OPERATION

The nurse will spend a few minutes with you and give you after care advice and answer any questions you may have. You may also be asked to fill in a satisfaction questionnaire about your experience at the Surgical Centre. Thank you in advance, as this helps us to improve our service. You can leave when you feel ready.

## **COMMON Qs and As:**

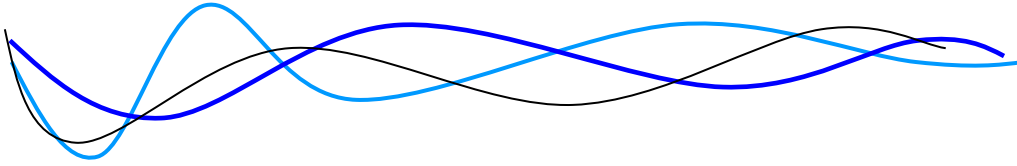
Below are common questions patients ask us:

1. **Do I still need to use contraception?** Yes. Please be aware that you must not abandon contraception until we have informed you in writing that your semen sample is negative for sperm.
2. **Can the operation fail?** Yes. The procedure occasionally fails to render the patient sterile due to early re-joining of one or both tubes. This happens in about 1:100 cases. Your semen analysis at 16 weeks will pick this up. Late re-joining can also occur but is rare, believed to occur in 1:2000 vasectomies. Because it is very rare, further semen tests are not routinely done. Unfortunately, it is usually picked up if your partner becomes pregnant. You should contact us if this happens.
3. **How and when do I do my sperm test?** Post- op semen test- This is essential to check that your operation has been successful. As soon as possible after your procedure please telephone the **Haematology Laboratory at RCHT (01872 252502)** to book an appointment for a Post vasectomy semen analysis at or after 16 weeks. This analysis is carried out by appointment only and cannot be accommodated without booking an appointment.

You will be provided with a small container and a request form after the operation for you to use to do your sperm test. Please produce one semen specimen by masturbation no sooner than 16 weeks after your operation. Condoms should not be used for that purpose. Please wash/shower before the test. It is estimated that men need to ejaculate at least 24 times during those 16 weeks before the test to clear the sperm that are already present in the tubes. It is also advised you have a period of abstinence between 2-7 days before doing the test. If for any reason, you have not been able to ejaculate 24 times, please reschedule your appointment with the lab until such time you have been able to do that.

**At your prebooked appointment time** Please deliver to the Haematology Laboratory reception (located in the link corridor via the Trelawney entrance), Royal Cornwall Hospital, Truro, TR1 3LJ. Your sample should be less than 2 hours old at delivery. Your partner may deliver your sample for you if you are unable to do so yourself. You will be informed of the result in writing about a fortnight later. Most men are cleared on their first sample. However, about 20% of men will have a positive first test.

4. **What happens if my test is positive?-** A first positive test happens in about 20%. In most cases, there are small numbers and non-motile sperm. We cannot give you clearance and your test would need to be repeated. You will be sent another form by post, but you will need to obtain another specimen bottle (ask for a silver top container) from your GP surgery. Sometimes, we may need to request a Fresh Semen Analysis. This looks at specific numbers and whether the sperm are motile or not (like a fertility test).
5. **When can I resume intercourse?** One week after. This allows time for the tubes to remain sealed.
6. **Do I need to take painkillers?** We recommend you take regular 'over the counter' painkillers as soon as you get home and do so for a few days. Keep the wound dry for 48 hours if at all possible.
7. **When can get back to work or exercise?** It is advisable that you make arrangements for light work for up to 2 weeks after your operation. No sports, heavy exercise or swimming is advised during that time. Your surgeon will give you a fit note if required.
8. **Can the operation be reversed in the future?** This is possible to do but the results are not good. It is best to regard a vasectomy as a permanent procedure. Vasectomy reversal is not available under the NHS.
9. **Will my sex life be affected?** Sexuality and virility- This is not affected. You will continue to have normal ejaculates but without sperm.



## **COMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

Any surgical procedure has an element of risk attached to it and occasionally things do not turn out as well as expected. Fortunately the complications are uncommon.

- A little soreness and bruising are usual.
- Wound haematoma (discrete painful collection of blood) or infection (painful red, hot wound +- a fever) do occasionally occur and may necessitate further treatment with drainage of the blood collection or antibiotics. These complications can occur in up to 5% of cases. Therefore you should report excessive discomfort or wound problem to your doctor.
- Granuloma- This is uncommon and consists of a tender lump at the end of the vas and is usually noticed several months after the operation. This is caused by a leak of sperm. It normally settles spontaneously. If persistent, it can be removed surgically.
- Slight swelling of the testis may occur. This resolves spontaneously but may take several weeks.
- Positive test at 7 months- Some men can have persistent but very small number of sperm, which are not motile. This is determined through a fresh semen analysis. In this case, we will issue you with a letter of 'special clearance'. Although pregnancy is not known to occur, the risk is not zero.
- Post vasectomy pain syndrome- An uncommon complication - pain may be experienced continually or intermittently for months or even years after. It may be very troublesome and occasionally require a further surgical procedure or vasectomy reversal. It is not possible to predict who might get it. Nationally, the quoted incidence is 0.5%, although as high as 5% has been reported whole-wide.

## **WHERE TO GET ADVICE**

If you have any concerns during your post-op period, you can get advice or help from one of these sources.

- Contact our surgical team on 01726 885104 during office hours.
- Your own doctor or nurse if it is easier for you.
- Out of hours GP service- contact 111 or the OOH number provided by your surgery
- Your local emergency department