



*Permanent  
Birth Control  
for Men*

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

There are two kinds of birth control, reversible and permanent. Permanent birth control for men is called vasectomy. Permanent birth control for women is called tubal sterilization or a "tubal." This pamphlet is about vasectomy. For more information about tubal sterilization, ask for the pamphlet, "Permanent Birth Control for Women."

The information about vasectomy in this pamphlet will help you decide if permanent birth control is right for you. Don't let anybody else make the decision for you. It is your choice.

**You may want permanent birth control if:**

- You are sure you do not want children in the future, even if your partner does.
- Pregnancy would be dangerous to your partner's health.
- You and your partner can't use or do not want to use other birth control methods.
- You have a medical problem that you could pass on to your children.

**How does vasectomy work?**

A man's testicles make sperm constantly. During sex the sperm travel through two tiny tubes, called the vas deferens.



As the sperm move through the vas deferens, they mix with fluid to form ejaculate (semen or "cum"). After ejaculation, if a sperm joins with a woman's egg, the woman may get pregnant.

During a vasectomy the vas deferens are blocked. Afterwards, the man will still ejaculate but no sperm will leave his body.

### **What happens to the sperm?**

The testicles continue to make sperm, but the body absorbs them.

### **How is vasectomy done?**

This operation is done in a doctor's office or clinic. First, medicine is used to numb a part of the scrotum. Then the doctor will make one or two small cuts in the skin of the scrotum to reach the tubes that carry the sperm. After each vas deferens is tied and cut, the skin is closed.

### **What are the risks?**

Any operation can cause health problems—some minor and some serious. Minor problems may include soreness, swelling, or bruising of the scrotum. These usually go away in a few days without any treatment.

Serious health problems are rare. They include infection or bleeding inside the scrotum.

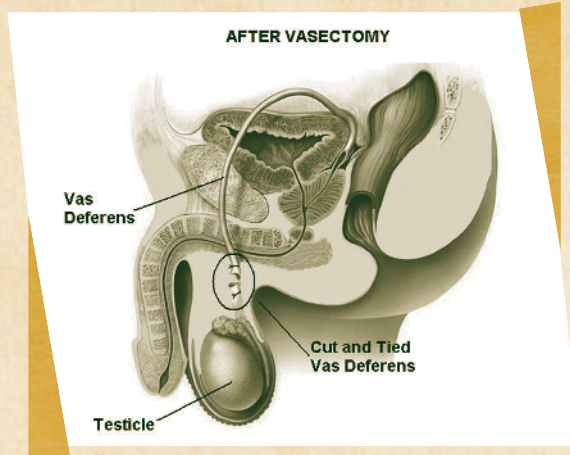
### **What will I feel during the operation?**

Most men say they feel a brief sharp stinging when the local anesthetic is given, and not much more once the anesthetic starts to work.

### **What should I expect after the operation?**

You will go home a few hours after the operation. You will want to take it easy for a few days. Your doctor will give you instructions for follow-up care.





### **When can I start having sex again after the operation?**

You can start having sex as soon as you feel comfortable, but you still need to use temporary birth control until there are no more sperm in your semen.

### **How soon will I be able to stop using other kinds of birth control?**

After the operation, you can still get a woman pregnant if you have sex without birth control. Your doctor will tell you when to have your semen tested. You can stop using other birth control when there are no more sperm in your semen. It usually takes from 15–20 ejaculations to remove all the sperm.

### **How effective is vasectomy?**

Vasectomy is a very effective and permanent way to prevent pregnancy. However, there is a very small chance that you could make a woman pregnant even though the vasectomy was done correctly. Be sure to have your semen tested after the operation.

### **How will vasectomy affect me?**

Vasectomy will NOT:

- Change the ability to get an erection.
- Change ejaculation.
- Lower a man's sex drive or desire.
- Make a man more feminine.
- Change male hormones.
- Cause a higher voice.
- Protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).
- Increase risk of heart disease.
- Increase risk for prostate cancer.
- Fix sexual, emotional or relationship problems.

Many men enjoy sex more after having a vasectomy because they no longer have to worry about their partner getting pregnant.

Some men may regret having had a vasectomy. You should think carefully before having a vasectomy, especially if you are young or do not have children.

### **Are there any health problems that can occur after vasectomy?**

Vasectomy has NOT been shown to cause cancer, heart disease, or other unhealthy conditions.

### **Will vasectomy protect me from STIs and HIV?**

No. Vasectomy will not protect you from STIs like chlamydia, gonorrhea, genital warts, herpes, syphilis, or HIV. If you are at risk for STIs or HIV, you should use a condom every time you have sex, even if you have had a vasectomy.

### **Can vasectomy be undone?**

Vasectomy should be considered permanent. It is very difficult to reverse. Even though the vas deferens can sometimes be reconnected or sperm cells removed with a needle and syringe, pregnancy may still not be possible.

Some men are interested in storing their sperm in a sperm bank before having a vasectomy. You should talk about this with your doctor.

### **Are there any forms I need to fill out?**

You will need to sign a consent form before your operation. If you have Medi-Cal, you must sign the consent form at least 30 days before your operation. You do not need permission from your partner or anyone else. After you sign the consent, you can still change your mind at any time before the operation.

### **Is a vasectomy the same as castration?**

No. Vasectomy is simply blocking the tubes that carry a man's sperm. The testicles are not removed.

### **Are there other ways to prevent pregnancy?**

Before you make up your mind about vasectomy, you might also want to think about tubal sterilization, which is permanent birth control for women. Vasectomy is safer, simpler, and less expensive than tubal sterilization.

If you think you might want children in the future, you or your partner should use a reversible method of birth



control. Some of the reversible methods are as effective as sterilization but when you stop using them you are still able to cause pregnancy. Your options for birth control are listed in the table at the end of this pamphlet.

**Vasectomy may be a good choice for you if:**

- You are sure you do not want children in the future, even if your partner does.
- Pregnancy would be dangerous to your partner's health.
- You cannot use or do not want to use other birth control methods.
- You have a medical problem that you could pass onto your children.

Think carefully about your decision to use permanent birth control! Vasectomy and tubal sterilization are safe, effective, and provide permanent protection from pregnancy. Talk with your clinician and make sure all of your questions have been answered.

***Make up your own mind about what is right for you.***

## METHODS OF BIRTH CONTROL

Method	Pregnancies in 100 couples in the first year of typical use
Vasectomy	Less than one
Tubal sterilization	Less than one
Intrauterine contraception	Less than one
Contraceptive injection	Less than one
Birth control pills	5
Contraceptive patch or ring	2
Male Condoms	14
Diaphragm, cervical cap	20
Periodic abstinence	25
Withdrawal	19
Spermicides	26
No method	85

Additional copies of this brochure may be obtained from the Department of Health Care Services web site:  
<http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/Pages/PermanentBirthControl.aspx>