



OFFICE OF POPULATION AFFAIRS

Male Sterilization THE FACTS



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Quick Facts

Effectiveness in Preventing Pregnancy:

- Out of 100 women each year whose partner has had a vasectomy, less than one may get pregnant.

STI Protection:

- No

Office Visit Required:

- Yes, done by a health care provider as an outpatient procedure (you go home the same day).

What is male sterilization?

Male sterilization, or vasectomy, is a procedure performed on a man that will permanently keep him from being able to get a woman pregnant.

Vasectomy is an outpatient procedure done under local anesthesia. After the local anesthesia is injected, the health care provider then makes tiny cuts (incisions) in the scrotum, the sac that holds the testes or “balls.” The vas deferens—two tubes that carry sperm to the penis—are then cut, tied or blocked.

Some men receive a no-scalpel vasectomy where, instead of cutting the skin of the scrotum, very tiny holes are made. The tubes that carry sperm are pulled through the holes and tied off and cut. A no-scalpel vasectomy does not require stitches.

After a vasectomy, a man will still produce semen, the fluid that comes out of his penis when he has sex. A man will need to return to his health provider after about three months to be tested to make sure there are no more sperm in his



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semen. It takes about three months to clear the sperm out of the system. A man should use another type of birth control (like a condom) until his health care provider tells him there are no longer any sperm in his semen.

There may be surgery available to reverse a vasectomy, but men should consider the procedure permanent. Before a vasectomy, men can also freeze their sperm for future use if they choose.

Where can I get a vasectomy?



A vasectomy can be done in a medical office or clinic. It is an outpatient procedure, so a man can go home the same day.

While not all family planning clinics perform vasectomies, your local family planning clinic may be able to tell you where vasectomy is available in your area. To find a family planning center near you, use OPA's clinic locator at <http://www.hhs.gov/opa/>

How effective is it?

Out of 100 women each year whose partner has had a vasectomy, less than one may get pregnant.



Advantages of male sterilization

- The man's partner doesn't have to know about it or do anything different.
- Lifts the contraceptive burden from the woman
- Safe and highly effective approach to preventing pregnancy
- Lasts a lifetime, so no need to worry about birth control again
- The procedure is simple to do and usually involves only a little bit of discomfort.
- Quick recovery time after the procedure
- Most cost-effective of all birth control methods



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Drawbacks of male sterilization

- Provides no protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV.
- Requires a visit to a clinic or medical office.
- Risk of swelling, bruising, and tenderness for a short time after the procedure
- Very rarely, the tubes that carry sperm can grow back together. When this happens there is a risk of pregnancy.
- Some men, or their partners, later change their minds and wish they could have a child or additional children.



Sources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- [Unintended Pregnancy Prevention: Contraception](#)

"Contraceptive Technology," Robert A. Hatcher, MD, MPH et. al., 20th revised edition, Contraceptive Technology Communications Inc., 2011

Food and Drug Administration

- [Birth Control: Medicines to Help You](#)

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