

# Having a Vasectomy

## What is a vasectomy?

- A vasectomy is a permanent method of birth control.
- The tubes (vas deferens) that carry the sperm from the testicle into the ejaculate (cum) are cut (see Figure 1). Without sperm, an egg can't be fertilized and a woman can't get pregnant.

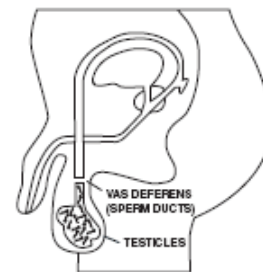


Figure 1

## How well does it work?

- A vasectomy is more than 99 percent effective. Very rarely, the tubes can rejoin and it will not work to prevent pregnancy.
- A vasectomy doesn't work right away. **It takes 8 weeks or longer to get rid of the sperm that is stored in the tubes.**
- Your healthcare provider will tell you when to go for a sperm test to make sure you can't cause a pregnancy. **Use another form of birth control (e.g., condoms) until your healthcare provider tells you that there is no sperm in your semen.**

## How is a vasectomy done?

- A vasectomy:
  - takes 15–30 minutes
  - is usually done while you are awake. Freezing (local anesthetic) is injected in both sides of the sac that holds your testicles (scrotum).
- One or two tiny cuts (incisions) are made in your scrotum. Each tube is gently pulled through the incision. A small section of each tube is taken out and the cut ends are sealed off.
- Your incisions are closed with stitches which will absorb as your body heals. Your incisions might have bandages on them or be left open to the air.

## What are the advantages of having a vasectomy?

- A vasectomy:
  - is a day procedure
  - does not interrupt intercourse
  - can lessen the worry about birth control for you and your partner
  - is an inexpensive form of birth control
- A vasectomy will **not** affect:
  - your hormones
  - your interest in sex
  - your ability to have an erection
  - the feeling you get while having sex
- You will not notice a difference when you ejaculate. Sperm makes up less than ten percent of the ejaculate fluid that is released.

## Things To Think About

- A vasectomy does not protect you from sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). Use a condom to protect yourself.
- Rarely, after having a vasectomy, you might have:
  - bleeding
  - pain
  - infection
  - swelling

If you have any of these symptoms, talk to your healthcare provider.

## Can a vasectomy be reversed?

- A vasectomy is permanent. **Do not** have a vasectomy unless you are sure you do not want to have children in the future.
- A vasectomy reversal can be done, but it:
  - might not work
  - is not covered by Alberta Health Care

## Follow-up

- Your doctor will tell you when to make a follow-up appointment.

## For More Information

### Sexual and Reproductive Health

Education/Health Promotion                      403-955-6515

### Clinical Services

Sheldon M. Chumir Health Centre	5 <sup>th</sup> floor, 1213–4 <sup>th</sup> St SW	403-955-6500
South Calgary Health Centre	31 Sunpark Plaza SE	403-943-9510
Sunridge Professional Building	406, 2675–36 <sup>th</sup> St NE	403-944-7666

## Website

[www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/sexualhealth](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/programs/sexualhealth)

For 24-hour nurse advice and health information, call Health link Alberta at 403-943-LINK (5465) in Calgary or 1-866-408-LINK (5465) toll-free.

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