

What is female sterilization?

Female sterilization is a permanent form of birth control for women. You have a choice of a few different types of procedures. Some methods require minor surgery. Newer methods do not require surgery. Sterilization blocks your fallopian tubes so that an egg cannot reach your uterus. It is safe and very effective.

How effective is female sterilization?

All forms of female sterilization are very effective. Sterilization prevents pregnancy in almost 100% of women who choose this method.

How does it work?

Female sterilization blocks your fallopian tubes. This prevents eggs from reaching your uterus. Since the egg and sperm cannot meet, you cannot get pregnant.

With the surgical method:

- Your fallopian tubes are tied and cut or sealed, usually through very small incisions into the abdomen.
- This method starts working right away. You will not need a back up form of birth control.
- You can have sex again as soon as you feel comfortable.
- Some people refer to this method as “tubal ligation” or “getting your tubes tied.”

With the non-surgical methods:

- Non-surgical sterilization involves getting a small device put into each fallopian tube. Scar tissue forms around the devices to block the tubes.
- It usually takes about three months for the tubes to be completely blocked.
- Your health care provider will check to make sure your tubes are blocked. It is important to schedule a follow-up visit to make sure you cannot get pregnant.
- You must use another form of birth control until your health care provider is sure that your tubes are blocked.

What are the benefits of female sterilization?

- Sterilization is safe, convenient, and permanent.
- You can have sex without worrying about getting pregnant.

What are the downsides of female sterilization?

- Female sterilization does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Sterilization is permanent. If there is even a small chance you want to have kids in the future, you should not choose this procedure. One out of 5 women who choose sterilization later regrets it.

- It requires visits to a health care provider.
- Reactions to anesthesia and other surgery risks are possible, but rare.

Where can I get female sterilization?

A trained health care provider can perform a sterilization procedure for you. This can be done in a medical office, hospital, or clinic.

Where can I get more information?

For more information on female sterilization, talk to your health care provider.

Compare female sterilization to other birth control options using ARHP's Method Match at www.arhp.org/MethodMatch.