

What is a vasectomy?

Vasectomy is a safe and effective permanent birth control method for men. Vasectomy is a simple procedure performed in an outpatient setting. A health care provider numbs the area and makes a small incision into the scrotum to block sperm from passing into the semen. This procedure has been used for many years and has very few side effects.

How effective is a vasectomy?

Vasectomy is extremely effective. Less than 1 out of 100 men who have a vasectomy will cause a pregnancy each year.

Because some sperm remain beyond the blocked part of the tubes, the procedure is not effective right away. You must use another form of birth control (like a condom) until the sperm are gone. This can take up to three months. Your health care provider will check to make sure there are no more sperm during a mandatory follow-up visit.

How does it work?

The vasectomy procedure is easy and safe. A small hole is made in the scrotum to reach both sperm transport tubes. The tubes are then tied and cut or sealed. The small opening heals quickly. No stitches are needed. You can begin sexual activity again as soon as you feel comfortable. Remember to use backup birth control until your health care provider confirms there are no sperm in the tubes.

What are the benefits of having a vasectomy?

- Vasectomy is safe, convenient, and permanent.
- You can have sex without worrying about causing pregnancy.

What are the downsides of having a vasectomy?

- Vasectomy does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- Vasectomy is a permanent method of birth control. A man should not have a vasectomy if there is even a small chance he may wish to have children in the future.
- Reactions to local anesthesia are possible, but rare.
- Some short-term tenderness and bruising may occur. Overall, there is little pain and a low risk of infection with vasectomy.

Where can I get a vasectomy?

A trained health care professional can perform a vasectomy in a medical office, hospital, or clinic.

Where can I get more information?

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

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