

## **Vasectomy**

### **What is a vasectomy?**

A vasectomy is a form of permanent birth control for men. The tubes that sperm travel through (the vas deferens) are cut and sealed to prevent pregnancy. Please note: a vasectomy will not protect you against STDs.

### **Who can benefit from having a vasectomy?**

Men who have decided that they no longer wish to have any children with their partner or in the future may decide that a vasectomy is the best option for them. However, this decision is not to be taken lightly, and you will need to discuss this with your doctor. Men under 30 who are considering a vasectomy can be refused the procedure if their doctor thinks they are not ready, and may be asked to consider other forms of birth control in the mean time.

### **Procedure**

There are two types of vasectomy surgery; both take around 15-30 minutes to complete and are usually performed under a local anesthetic.

- ✓ **Scalpel vasectomy** - In the case of a scalpel vasectomy, the skin of the scrotum is numbed with the anesthetic and one or two incisions made (about 1cm each). Following the incisions your surgeon can then access the vas deferens (the tubes which carry sperm out of your testes), which are cut and a small section removed, before being heat-sealed or tied shut. The incisions are then closed using dissolvable stitches.
- ✓ **No scalpel vasectomy** - The no scalpel vasectomy means that no incisions are made on the scrotum. Instead, your surgeon will feel for the vas deferens and hold them in place using a clamp. A tiny hole is punctured in the skin of the scrotum, and stretched open. Once the vas deferens have been located, they are then heat-sealed or tied shut, as with scalpel surgery. You will not need any stitches following the no scalpel vasectomy.

### **Recovery period**

A vasectomy does not involve a stay in hospital and you will be able to go home following the procedure. You will probably be aware of swelling and some pain, which you can take painkillers for, and it is advised to take a couple of days off work because of this. It is important not to do any strenuous activities for one week, and to wear close-fitting underwear to help support the scrotum. A vasectomy will not lower your sex drive or affect your erection, orgasm and ejection abilities, and you will be able to resume having sexual intercourse when ready. However, you will need to use a condom until you have received test results confirming that your semen is clear of any sperm following the vasectomy (these will be done about six weeks after your vasectomy procedure).

## **Risks**

Risks are minimal with vasectomy surgery, but they can occur. These include increasing pain, blood clotting, hematoma (bleeding inside the scrotum) and sperm leaking into the surrounding tissue creating small lumps (harmless, but sometimes painful). There is also a very rare chance that the tubes can grow back together and begin to generate sperm again.