

vasectomy

care after your procedure



MARIE STOPES
INTERNATIONAL

About Marie Stopes International

Marie Stopes International is one of the UK's most respected names in sexual health. Each year, our network of centres across the UK help over 100,000 women and men with their sexual health needs.

Our supportive and professional team provide the highest possible quality service in a friendly and relaxed environment.

Since the 1970s over 140,000 British men have trusted us to perform their vasectomies. But the good work does not stop here.

Across the world Marie Stopes International also provides reproductive healthcare services to people in some of the world's poorest communities including Africa, Asia and South America.

By choosing Marie Stopes International for your vasectomy, you have supported our work in these countries too.

Your procedure

It's important that you read this information carefully and take it home with you for your reference. If you are concerned about any aspect of your recovery following your vasectomy you can call us at any time for advice and support.

Marie Stopes International

24 hour aftercare line **0845 122 1441**

Your vasectomy procedure has been performed by an experienced doctor using the following method:

- A local anaesthetic injection was given to numb the area.
- One small incision was made in the scrotum.
- The tubes that carry the sperm (the vas deferens) were located and heat sealed.
- The wound is small and will heal on its own after a week or two. No stitches were used.

Vasectomy aftercare

After your vasectomy we advise you to go straight home and relax for at least 48 hours. Avoid long periods of standing or walking for a few days after your procedure. We also recommend that you avoid drinking alcohol for at least 24 hours after your vasectomy.

The local anaesthetic you were given will wear off in a couple of hours and you might feel a bit sore. If you are uncomfortable, take a painkiller such as ibuprofen or paracetamol. Only take these if you have no history of allergy or there's no other reason why you should not take them.

Cooling the area can also help to reduce pain and any swelling. This can be done by wrapping some ice or a pack of frozen vegetables in a clean tea towel and holding it against the sore area. Take care not to get the wound wet as this may affect healing.

Most men find they get some bruising around their testicles and this can spread to the penis and groin area. Anti-inflammatory painkillers such as ibuprofen can be helpful. You might notice that a small pea sized lump develops around the wound. Don't worry, this is your body's natural reaction to the healing process and needs no special treatment.

The dressing should be kept dry and held in place for at least 48 hours by wearing close-fitting supportive briefs or swimming trunks during the day and at night. This provides more support, can reduce pain, and will be more comfortable.

48 hours after your operation, have a short bath or shower to help remove the dressing. Do not use toiletries such as bath oils or talcum powder as they can irritate the area. Dry the area thoroughly and put on the clean dressing that you were given.

You can resume sexual activity as soon as it feels comfortable to do so (which is usually about a week). **Please ensure that you use contraception until we confirm that your vasectomy has been successful.**

Driving

You must not drive yourself home after your vasectomy because you may feel light-headed and there is a risk that the wound may be irritated or reopen. You will be able to drive the day after your operation if necessary.

Going back to work

You should be fit enough to return to work after a couple of days, unless you have a physically demanding job. If you have a manual occupation that involves heavy lifting for example, we would recommend that you only return to work if you are able to avoid the physical aspect for two weeks. Otherwise only return after two weeks. Please call us for advice if you are unsure about your particular type of work.

Sport

Avoid sports and physical exercise for at least two weeks following the procedure. This includes cycling, swimming and golf.

Heavy physical exercise and contact sports should be avoided for four weeks. Examples include rugby, football, squash and skiing.

Be guided by how quickly your wound is healing and how fast any swelling or pain goes away. If you are in doubt please call us for advice.

Flying

We recommend that you avoid:

- Short haul flights (up to three hours) for 48 hours after your vasectomy.
- Long haul flights for at least a week after your vasectomy.

Possible complications

Most people find their vasectomy goes smoothly and there are no complications. However, it's a good idea to be aware of possible complications so that you can react quickly. If in doubt, call us on 0845 122 1441 (24 hours) for advice.

Possible complications include:

- Prolonged bruising. This does not usually cause any problems and disappears over time.
- Infection can occur after any kind of surgery. After vasectomy, infection can enter through the cut in the scrotum. This is less likely to happen if the area is kept clean and dry. You could have an infection if your wound becomes very painful, red, swollen and tender and/or you have a raised temperature and feel generally unwell. If this happens, you should contact us straight away or see your GP.
- Occasionally men experience a small amount of bleeding from the wound. This is not often a cause for concern and can usually be stopped by pinching the wound closed with a clean finger and thumb and holding for five minutes.
If this does not stop the bleeding then you should contact us straight away or contact your GP.
- Rarely, a small blood vessel can bleed inside the scrotum and cause a blood clot (called a haematoma). These are usually very small but can occasionally be large and lead to severe swelling and discomfort. It can occur from a few hours to a few days after treatment and may be the result of too much strenuous activity. These blood clots usually calm down on their own.
If you experience excessive swelling or bruising and discomfort, contact us for advice.
- A few men experience aching or pain in the testes. This can occur immediately or some months after the vasectomy. For most men this pain is mild and relieved by painkillers. If the pain persists, you may need follow-up treatment. Contact us for advice.
A very small number of men have been known to experience long term testicular pain following a vasectomy which may require follow-up treatment.
However, we stress that in over 140,000 vasectomies performed at our centres, we have seen very few cases of this kind.
- Very rarely, sperm can leak from the sealed sperm-carrying tubes (vas deferens) and form a small lump in the scrotum. These lumps are not usually painful and can often be treated with anti-inflammatory medicine, such as ibuprofen.
If they become very large they may need to be removed. If you develop a lump please call us for advice.

Testing your semen

As long as you use contraception, you can resume sexual activity as soon as you feel able.

To make sure that your operation has been successful, we need to test your semen to check that no sperm are present. Before you begin the testing, you need to have had at least 20 ejaculations.

To do the test, you need to provide two semen samples, one at 16 weeks after your vasectomy (or after 20 ejaculations, if this is later) and one at 18 weeks (or two weeks after the first sample). In some men it takes longer to clear the remaining sperm and if your 18 week test is not clear, you will need to provide two further samples at 26 and 28 weeks.

You should not consider your vasectomy to be successful until we inform you in writing that your semen is clear of sperm. You should continue to use another method of contraception until this time.

When you left the centre you were given two sample kits to be used for sending your semen samples to us. You were also given exact dates to take and send in the samples. Samples sent earlier than the given dates will not be accepted, however samples sent later will be tested.

There must be 14 days between your first and second samples. This reduces the possibility of false positive results and makes the testing process less hassle for you.

Sample testing instructions

The sample bag given to you after your operation contains all the necessary items for you to provide us with semen samples at 16 weeks (or if later, after 20 ejaculations) and at 18 weeks (or two weeks after the first sample).

Please remember to check your pack when you get home.

Your pack should contain:

- ✓ 2 condoms
- ✓ 2 semen collecting kits, each containing:
 - ✓ 1 small clear sample pot
 - ✓ 1 transport container
 - ✓ 1 plastic envelope
- ✓ 2 prepaid padded envelopes
- ✓ 2 laboratory slips
- ✓ 2 melolin dressings - to replace the one the doctor put on the wound
- ✓ 1 online sperm sample card

If anything is missing please call 0845 120 3641.

- Do not ejaculate for a full 48 hours prior to giving your samples. Ejaculate into the special condom provided and empty all your semen into the sample pot. Throw the condom away - do not include it in the sample pot. If you do, the sample will not count and you will have to do it again.
- When all the semen is in the sample pot, screw the lid on tightly and write your full details on the pot. If you do not fill out your details or date the pot, the laboratory will throw it away and you will have to go through the process again.
- Put the sample pot into the larger transport container to protect it in the post.
- Fill out your details on the laboratory slip and ensure that it says your name, date of birth, centre, client number and date of ejaculation.
- Put the laboratory slip and the transport container into the plastic envelope and seal it. Put the pack into the pre-paid padded envelope, making sure it is well sealed before posting.

We will contact you after receiving the second semen sample to let you know your results. If you do not hear from us within five working days of sending the second sample, please call us on **0845 120 3641**. Two sperm-free samples are needed to confirm a successful outcome i.e. a 'negative' result.

You can also access your results online at www.vasectomy.org.uk. We will always also write to you with your results and please wait for your letter to confirm that your vasectomy has been successful.

You may be required to produce further samples. If this happens, we will provide you with additional kits and contact you when all samples have been received and analysed.

Your first sample should be produced on or after:

Your second sample should then be produced on or after:

(Or 14 days after your first sample)

Your centre / client number:

Please ensure that you have completed all the information on the sample pot label and that the information is also copied onto the laboratory slip. It is important that this information is supplied as all unlabelled and/or undated samples are immediately thrown away and you will have to provide new samples.

Please remember that throughout the testing process you must use an alternative method of contraception at all times.

Please also note: the samples must not be provided before the dates specified and should be at least 14 days apart.

space for your notes

We hope that this booklet has been useful. If there is anything you are unsure about or you are worried, please call us on

0845 122 1441 (24 hours)

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