



York and Scarborough  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Having a Vasectomy

Information for patients, relatives and carers

## Department of Urology

① For more information or advice, please contact the hospital, ward or unit where you have your appointment:

Malton Hospital: Telephone 01653 604611/ 01904 725846  
Middlecave Road, Malton, YO17 7NG

York Hospital: Telephone 01904 726010  
Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE

Scarborough Hospital: Telephone 01723 385246  
Woodlands Drive, Scarborough, YO12 6QL

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# Introduction

The following information is a guide as to what to expect for before, during and after your vasectomy operation. Everyone is different and recovers at different rates; therefore, it is impossible to put everything in writing. This leaflet covers the most common questions patients have about their recovery and aims to give you some reassurance as to what can normally be expected. Your doctor can answer any questions you might have which you feel are not covered in this leaflet.

The doctors and nurses are there to help you. They will always make time to listen to you and answer your questions. If you do not fully understand anything about your vasectomy, please ask.

If you become ill or cannot keep your appointment for any reason, please tell us as early as possible so that another patient can be offered treatment. We will rearrange your appointment. To tell us about a change please contact us via the telephone the number given on your appointment letter.

Please bring your completed admission form with you and your consent form if you have signed it in advance.

Once you have been told your time to arrive at hospital, please follow the rules below:

- You should have **no** food or cloudy drinks during the six hours before your admission.
- You should drink plenty of clear fluids (those you can see through) until **two** hours before your admission.
- You should not have anything during the **two** hours prior to your admission.
- Do bath or shower as usual before your appointment.
- Please bring a pair of close fitting underpants, swimming shorts or a jock strap to wear after the operation but **not** boxer shorts.
- Do keep valuables at home.
- Do bring something to help pass the time while you wait on the ward, e.g. books, magazines.
- Do arrange for an adult to accompany you home and to stay with you for 24 hours following surgery.

Do arrange your transport home. Car parking is available at all our hospitals. For more information, please see our website.

Before your procedure, please telephone us immediately if you have any of the following...

- An artificial heart valve
- A coronary artery stent
- A pacemaker or defibrillator
- A regular prescription for Warfarin, Clopidogrel (Plavix®) or other blood thinning tablets
- A previous or current MRSA infection
- A high risk of variant-CJD (if you have received a corneal transplant, a neurosurgical dural transplant or previous injections of human-derived growth hormone)

**Our contact numbers are:**

For York Hospital patients:  
01904 726518 or 01904 725707

For Scarborough/Bridlington Hospitals patients:  
01723 342437

## **What is a vasectomy?**

A vasectomy is an operation on your sperm-carrying tubes (called 'vas deferens', or 'vas' for short). You have two tubes, one on each side. Both tubes are divided at a point between the testes (where the sperm is produced) and the seminal vesicles (where the sperm is stored). The vasectomy operation prevents sperm from reaching the seminal vesicles causing sterility.

## **Is a vasectomy reversible?**

This sterilisation procedure may not be reversible. You should regard it as permanent.

## **Are there any risks in having a vasectomy?**

Most procedures have a potential for side effects. You should be reassured that although all these complications are well recognised, the majority of patients do not suffer from any problems at all.

In over nine out of 10 cases, the operation is successful but, in the remainder, sperm can be present after many months. If this happens in your case, your consultant will arrange to see you again, and you will have to provide further samples.

## **Common** (greater than one in 10)

- A small amount of skin bruising is inevitable for several days.
- Seepage of a small amount of yellowish fluid from the incision for several days.
- Blood in the semen for the first few ejaculations.
- The procedure should be regarded as irreversible. Reversal procedures are not always effective, particularly if you smoke or there has been more than seven years since the original vasectomy.
- You must continue to use an alternative form of contraception until your sterility is confirmed by your production of a semen sample containing no sperm. You will be asked to submit the first of these 12-14 weeks after your vasectomy. One in 10 men need to provide further semen samples until sterility is confirmed.
- Periodic ongoing testicular discomfort (one in 10).

## **Occasional** (between one in 10 and one in 50)

- Significant bruising or bleeding potentially requiring further surgery.
- Inflammation or infection of the testes or epididymis (tube between testes and vas deferens) requiring antibiotic treatment.

## **Rare** (less than one in 50)

- Early failure of the procedure to produce sterility (one in 250-500).
- Severe chronic testicular pain (one in 200).
- Rejoining of the ends of the vas deferens, after sterility has previously been confirmed, resulting in fertility and pregnancy at a later stage (one in 2,300).

## **Hospital-Acquired Infection**

- Colonisation with MRSA (0.9% - one in 110)
- Clostridium difficile bowel infection (0.2% - one in 500)
- MRSA bloodstream infection (0.08% - one in 1,250)

There is no evidence that vasectomy causes any long-term health risks, such as testicular or prostate cancer. Your surgeon will have discussed the risks with you in the outpatient clinic. If you are concerned about any of the risks, however, please speak to your surgeon again.

## **What are the benefits of having a vasectomy?**

Vasectomy is a very effective form of contraception, which you should consider permanent. The operation is a relatively minor one with few side effects.



## **What are the alternatives to a vasectomy?**

You might consider using a barrier method of contraception, for example, condoms. Alternatively, your partner might choose to use the contraceptive pill, an intrauterine contraceptive system, or sterilisation. Vasectomy, however, is a simpler operation than female sterilisation and has fewer risks.

## **What happens when I arrive at the ward?**

The nurses introduce themselves to you and explain what will happen to you during your stay. You will be asked about your present medicines, any allergies you may have, your arrangements for going home and who is to look after you.

The surgeon will check your details with you and ask you to sign the consent form (reference FYCON25-1 Bilateral Vasectomy) (if you have not already done so) saying that you:

- Fully understand your operation and anaesthetic,
- Fully understand the risks and benefits,
- Are aware of the alternatives, and
- Agree to have the operation.

## **What happens before my vasectomy?**

You are asked to change into a theatre gown and one of our dressing gowns. You may prefer to bring your own, but it must be clean as you are going into an operating theatre area.

You will be taken to the operating theatre where your identity is checked as part of the safety procedures.

## **What kind of anaesthetic will I have?**

You will usually have a local anaesthetic, but some patients prefer a general anaesthetic. You should discuss this with your doctor in the outpatient clinic. Please remember, you **must not** drive for 24 hours following a general anaesthetic.

If you are having a general anaesthetic, your anaesthetist will speak to you before your vasectomy to discuss any concerns you may have and to check when you last had something to eat or drink.

You should also be given a leaflet with more information about anaesthetics and preparing for surgery.

## **What happens during my vasectomy operation?**

If you are having a local anaesthetic, the surgeon uses a very fine needle to inject anaesthetic into the upper part of your scrotum to numb the whole area.

The surgeon makes a very small cut in your scrotum to reach the vas deferens. Between one and two centimetres (about three quarters of an inch) of the vas tube is then removed, and the cut ends tied. The small cuts are closed with dissolving stitches. The procedure is repeated on the opposite side.

If you have had a general anaesthetic, you must not drive yourself, cycle or use public transport. As you may feel faint, you are advised not to drive or cycle home following a local anaesthetic.

## **What happens after my vasectomy?**

If you have had a general anaesthetic, you are taken to the recovery area where a nurse will check your progress. When the nurse is happy with your recovery, you will be returned to your trolley or bed in the ward area. You will be offered a drink when you are able to sit up. If you have had a local anaesthetic, you walk back to the ward from the operating theatre.

## **How will I feel after my vasectomy?**

You will have some soreness and swelling for a day or two. Any discomfort should be controlled with simple painkillers, for example, paracetamol.

## **Before you leave the ward**

A nurse will go through the discharge instructions with you and tell you about the care you need at home. Please ask if you are unsure of any of the instructions.

## **When can I go home?**

Following a general anaesthetic, you will be able to go home with an adult who can look after you when it is felt you are ready. Although you may leave the ward unaccompanied after a local anaesthetic, you are advised to have someone with you. Your surgeon will discuss your operation with you before you go home.

## **Can I bath or shower?**

Please keep your stitches dry for the first 24 hours following your operation, and then bath or shower every day. Your stitches will dissolve in 10 to 30 days.

## **When can I resume my usual activities?**

For the first day following your operation, you should rest as much as possible. Usually it will take between 7 and 10 days for you to recover from your operation. During this period, you should avoid strenuous activity.

## **When can I drive again?**

You will be able to drive again after one day.

## **When can I have sex again?**

If it does not cause discomfort, you may resume sexual intercourse three days after your operation. Do use another method of contraception.

## **When can I stop using other methods of contraception?**

Because sperm is stored in the seminal vesicles, it can take several months for it to clear. You will, therefore, be asked to supply a single sample of your semen 12 -14 weeks after your operation. These will be examined in the laboratory. If there is no sperm present, we will let you and doctor know. Otherwise we will ask you to repeat the semen test every month thereafter until you are confirmed as sterile. You must continue to use another method of contraception until we tell you that your semen test is clear.

# What should I do if I have any problems or worries after going home?

During the first 24 hours after your operation, please contact the ward where you have received treatment:

## York Hospital Wards:

Day Unit between 8am and 5pm	01904 726010
Ward 14 between 5pm and 8am	01904 726014
or Ward G1 between 5pm and 8am	01904 726001

## Scarborough/Bridlington Hospital Wards:

Maple Ward (Scarborough)	01723 236261
Lilac Ward (Scarborough)	01723 342805
Ash Ward (Scarborough)	01723 385220
Lloyd Ward (Bridlington)	01262 423134

**Malton Diagnostic Unit** 01653 604611

If you have continuing problems and need further advice, please contact your GP.

Please ask if there is anything you do not fully understand about your treatment or if there is anything you are uncertain about.

## **Tell us what you think of this leaflet**

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact:

Mr J R Wilson, Department of Urology,  
The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE or  
telephone 01904 725846

## **Teaching, training and research**

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

## **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net](mailto:yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net).

An answer phone is available out of hours.

# Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website:

[www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/](http://www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/)

Owner	Mr J R Wilson, Consultant Urologist
Date first issued	March 2002
Review Date	September 2027
Version	8 (reissued September 2024)
Approved by	Urology MDT
Linked to consent form	FYCON25-1 Bilateral Vasectomy v6.3
Document Reference	PIL 124 v8.3

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