About Your Procedure: Vasectomy

This handout explains how to prepare for and what to expect after having a vasectomy.

What is a vasectomy?
A vasectomy is a minor surgery for male sterilization. It is often done as a form of birth control.

During the procedure, your vasa deferentia (the tubes that connect your testes with your urethra) are cut and sealed or tied. This keeps sperm from entering the seminal stream (ejaculate).

Vasectomies are usually done in a doctor's office or hospital.

How should I prepare?

- For 10 days before your procedure, do not take any aspirin or aspirin-like drugs such as ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) or naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn). These drugs may cause excess bleeding during and after your procedure.

- If you plan to take a sedative (calming medicine) such as Valium 1 hour before your procedure:
  - You must arrange for a responsible adult to drive you to and from the procedure. You will not be allowed to drive yourself home. It is not legal or safe.
  - You must sign all consent forms in advance. You cannot sign consent forms if you are under the influence of a sedative.

On the Day of Surgery

- Please thoroughly shave your entire scrotum. This will make you more comfortable during the procedure.

- Wear loose, comfortable clothing.
• You may bring an athletic support (jock strap) with you to wear home after your procedure. We will provide one for you if you do not bring one.

• You may eat a light meal before your procedure.

What to Expect
Before your vasectomy:

• Your nurse will clean the area around your scrotum with a warm liquid.
• You will receive a long-acting anesthetic (numbing medicine).
• You will be awake during the procedure.

The procedure will take only 20 to 30 minutes to complete.

After the Procedure

Pain Medicine

• If your doctor prescribes Vicodin for pain, you may take it as directed. Do not drive while you are taking prescription pain medicines.

• For mild discomfort, you can take Extra-Strength Tylenol, 1 to 2 pills every 6 hours as needed.

• Do not take acetaminophen (Tylenol) while you are taking Vicodin. If you are given pain medicine other than Vicodin, ask your doctor or nurse if it is safe to take acetaminophen while you are taking your prescription pain medicine.

• You may also take ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn), 1 to 2 pills every 4 hours to reduce swelling and pain.

Self-care

• To reduce swelling, use cold packs on your groin area off and on for 24 hours after your surgery:
  - Place a thin towel on your groin area and lay the cold pack (such as a bag of frozen peas) on top of the towel. Do not place the cold pack directly on your skin.
  - Leave the cold pack on for 20 minutes, then off for 20 minutes. Keep doing this for the first 24 hours after your procedure. Keep your scrotum cool, NOT cold.

• After 24 hours, remove all bandages from inside the athletic support.

• Keep using the athletic support for at least 3 days.

• It is OK to shower after you remove the bandages. Be sure to dry the area gently but fully.
Physical Symptoms
It is normal to have:

- Slight swelling of your scrotum.
- Very mild bleeding or drainage from the incision site.
- Bruising of your scrotum and the base of your penis. This should go away in about a week.

Activity

- After 24 hours, or when you feel better, you can resume normal, light activity.
- After 4 days, you can resume more vigorous activities such as jogging or weight lifting. Let your body be your guide. If an activity feels uncomfortable, slow down or stop and rest.
- You may return to work when you feel comfortable enough to do so. Most men return to work within 1 to 2 days.
- After 7 days, you may resume sexual activity.

IMPORTANT: Even after a vasectomy, you may have sperm in your semen for 3 to 6 months or longer. If you want to avoid pregnancy, you MUST use a reliable form of birth control until your follow-up semen analysis shows there is no sperm in your semen.

Follow-up Visit for Semen Analysis

- You will need to come to our clinic 3½ months after your vasectomy to provide a semen sample.
- You must not ejaculate for 2 to 5 days before this appointment.
- Call the UW Men’s Health Center at 206.598.6358 to schedule this visit.
- Call the Men’s Health Center at 206.598.6358 for your semen analysis results. These will be available within 1 to 2 days.

When to Call the Clinic

Call the Men’s Health Center, or if it is after business hours, go directly to the Emergency Room, if you have:

- A lot of redness, swelling, bruising, pain, or bulging at your incision site
- A fever higher than 101°F (38.3°C)
- Shaking or chills
- Allergic reactions to drugs, such as hives, rash, nausea or vomiting