



# Your guide to getting a **vasectomy**

## **What is a vasectomy?**

Vasectomy is a quick, safe, and effective method of contraception. It is a form of male sterilisation that involves a surgical procedure to cut or seal the tubes (called the vas deferens) that carry sperm. This means the semen (fluid ejaculated during sex) contains no sperm and therefore cannot fertilise the egg.

## **Having a vasectomy at MSI Reproductive Choices UK**

We offer a full service which includes:

- consultation
- vasectomy procedure
- 24-hour aftercare
- a semen testing service arranged through the post
- counselling appointments, if required.

Our teams provide high quality care in friendly and relaxing clinics. Our services are completely confidential. We won't let anyone know about your appointment with us, without your permission.

We don't refuse anyone an appointment because of their age, marital status, or because they have no children. We do ask people under 25 years old to speak to one of our trained counsellors before making their final decision.

## **Choosing a vasectomy**

Vasectomy is a permanent method of contraception and cannot be easily reversed.

Before choosing a vasectomy you need to be certain it is right for you. You should only proceed if you are certain you don't want to have any, or any more, children. The choice is yours to make.

## Counselling

If you would like to talk to someone impartial before you make your decision, we can arrange vasectomy counselling for you. Our counsellors give confidential, non-judgemental support. Talking about your decision can help you to make sure that a vasectomy is the right choice for you. For most of our clients, counselling is an optional part of their vasectomy treatment. However, there is a mandatory requirement to have counselling if you are under 25 years old.



**If you would like to have counselling before you make your decision, you can call us anytime to make an appointment – 0345 300 8090**

## Medical history

There are some medical conditions that mean having a vasectomy would not be a suitable option for you. Because of this, we will ask you about your medical history to make sure the procedure is safe for you. It's extremely important that you give us accurate information about any drugs or medication that you are taking. We also need to know if you have had or plan to have any of the following:

- blood thinning medication, for example warfarin or aspirin
- previous surgery on your testicles
- any hernia repairs
- metal plates or pins inside your body (remove any body piercings prior to your appointment)
- any ongoing medical investigations or recent diagnosis.

## What we need to know

During your consultation, we will need to be sure that you know what it means to have a vasectomy and that you have freely made an informed decision.

## Cooling off period

After your consultation, you'll start a 10-day 'cooling off period'. We have this because it's best practice to give you time to make sure you have understood everything about the vasectomy procedure. Your procedure appointment can be booked for a convenient time after this period has ended.



## Prior to your appointment



**Alcohol:** Do not drink alcohol or take recreational drugs for 24 hours before your appointment. If you have taken recreational drugs, please tell us. This could affect your treatment and ability to consent.

---



**Bathing:** Please take a bath or shower before leaving home on the day of your appointment.

---



**Clothing:** Make sure you have some tight-fitting cotton underwear (one or two sizes smaller than usual) and wear these to your appointment. You will need enough pairs for at least seven days and nights following your appointment. Please wear these to your appointment.

---



**Pain relief:** All clients are encouraged to take some pain relief an hour before the appointment, such as paracetamol and/or ibuprofen, if you are able to take these. We do not advise you take aspirin as pain relief, however, if you normally take aspirin, please discuss this with the team beforehand.

---



**Food and drink:** Please make sure you have something light to eat and drink prior to your appointment.

---

## At your appointment

Please arrive 15 minutes prior to your appointment time. After you've signed in, a team member will take your observations including blood pressure and go through the consent process. You can expect to be at the centre for around one hour although the procedure itself will take about 10-15 minutes.

All procedures are subject to assessment on the day, which includes your observational checks and a brief physical examination. We would advise any questions or queries are raised during this time with the team. Safeguarding questions will also be asked to ensure all clients safety.

### Find out more

Scan the QR code to find out more.

or visit [www.mschoices.org.uk/vasectomy/](http://www.mschoices.org.uk/vasectomy/)



---

# The procedure

---



You will be shown into the treatment room and introduced to the team. The surgeon will then ask you to remove your underwear, so they are able to examine you. If there are no concerns with the examination and all other checks are satisfactory, they will begin the procedure.



Local anaesthetic is injected into the scrotum and given time to work. A small hole less than 1cm is made to access the vas deferens, although the exact area may change from patient to patient depending on anatomy.



The vas deferens are heat sealed. This process results in an odour that you may find noticeable. This is nothing to be concerned about. Sutures may be required in rare circumstances. Each client is different, some experience a “tugging sensation” or mild discomfort. If you experience pain, additional local anaesthetic can be used.



The wound will be dressed with a loose non-stick gauze before you put your clothes back on, with assistance provided if needed.



You'll then be walked through to the recovery area where refreshments and biscuits are provided. Clients are usually here for around 20-30 minutes and observations will be taken during this time.



The team will discuss recovery and aftercare advice with you, if you have any questions please ask at this stage.



All clients are given an aftercare pack to go home with. This includes a non-spermicidal condom, semen sample pot, laboratory slip, pre-stamped envelope, 2 dressings – small paper bag.



Once you feel well enough and the team are satisfied, you will be able to leave.



You should not drive to or from your appointment. If you cannot be accompanied in a vehicle, we recommend you organise a taxi or be accompanied on public transport.

## **Pain**

The local anaesthetic will wear off after a couple of hours. Over the counter pain relief such as ibuprofen and/or paracetamol is advised. You may need to continue taking this regularly for the next few days. We do not advise taking aspirin as pain relief. If you normally take aspirin as part of a treatment for another medical condition, please discuss with the team beforehand.

You may experience pain in the following areas: testicles, penis, groin and lower abdomen. This is normal and will vary from one person to the next. This pain should subside after a couple of days – up to a week. A small number of clients have been known to have long-term or intermittent pain after a vasectomy. If you have any concerns about pain, please call our 24-hour advice line.

## **Swelling and bruising**

You should expect some swelling and bruising. This can vary between clients. Sometimes bruising can show in various colours depending on skin tone. This bruising will subside over time.

In rare circumstances, bruising can be extensive and can extend to the penis, thighs and pubis.

If your penis or testicles swells significantly, i.e., to double its size or more, then you should contact the Aftercare line on **0345 122 1441** for further advice. An anti-inflammatory such as ibuprofen can help with the bruising and swelling if you are able to take this. Ice packs wrapped in a clean towel and placed on the affected area can also be used to reduce swelling and inflammation.

## **Care of the wound**

In addition to wearing tight fitting underwear (during the day and night), the initial thick dressing should be kept on, and kept clean and dry for 48 hours. After 48 hours, clients are encouraged to have a shower. The area must be carefully dried with a clean cloth before a new dressing is applied. Avoid long soaks in the bath until the wound is healed. Do not use perfumed toiletries as this can irritate the area.

## **The post-vasectomy clearance (confirmation of sterility)**

It's important to comply with the post-vasectomy semen testing process before relying on your vasectomy as a permanent form of contraception. You'll receive instructions on how to process the semen sample, and you should follow the instructions carefully (including the completion of the paperwork) to enable a swift processing by the laboratory. Most clients require a single test, at approximately 16 weeks, to obtain clearance, however, a small number of clients may need more than one test. In very rare cases a fresh semen test is required.

## Physical recovery



**Work:** If you have a physically demanding job that involves heavy lifting, bending or stretching repeatedly, you're advised to either do light duties or take time off from work. We are unable to provide a sick note, however a GP may be able to arrange this for you.



**Gym/exercising:** You can resume light exercise, such as swimming, walking and golf, after two weeks. But you should avoid any contact sports or heavy workouts, including rugby, cycling, weightlifting, squash, going to the gym or skiing etc., for four weeks. If you're in any doubt, please contact the Aftercare line.



**Flying:** Avoid short haul flights for 48 hours and long haul for 1 week.



**Alcohol:** You should not drink alcohol for 48 hours following a vasectomy procedure.

## FAQ

**When can I have sex?** When you feel comfortable to do so, however, we advise you refrain from sexual intercourse for 48-72 hours after the procedure. Please remember, until your semen analysis test result has been received, you won't know if the treatment is successful. We advise you use alternative contraception until you have received confirmation of your test results. Condoms are the only contraception that offer protection against STIs.

**Will I still be able to ejaculate?** Yes. Vasectomy does not affect an orgasm or the appearance of semen.

**Will it affect my sex drive?** No, a vasectomy will not affect your sex drive. The testes will still produce testosterone.

**Does a vasectomy work straight away?** No. You'll need to wait until your sperm analysis result is sent back to you. During this time, it is essential to continue to use contraception to avoid an unwanted pregnancy. Most vasectomies are successful within 16 weeks, however, for some clients it can take several months to see a negative test result.