

# YOUR VASECTOMY AFTERCARE BOOKLET

What you need to know and support  
for your recovery at home



**Please read this booklet before your appointment.**

**You will be offered a printed version of this booklet to take home with you on the day of your procedure.**

**This booklet contains all you need to know about your vasectomy procedure and how to look after yourself during your recovery at home.**

**It also provides information about semen testing following your vasectomy.**

**More information can be found on our website**

[www.msichoice.org.uk](http://www.msichoice.org.uk)

**You can call our 24-hour aftercare line on 0345 122 1441**  
if you need to speak to a healthcare professional

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# RECOVERY AND AFTERCARE

**Following your vasectomy procedure, and while you are in the recovery room, our team will give you aftercare advice. They'll give you an aftercare and semen testing pack and make sure that you understand the advice in it.**

We recommend that you go straight home and rest for at least 48 hours.

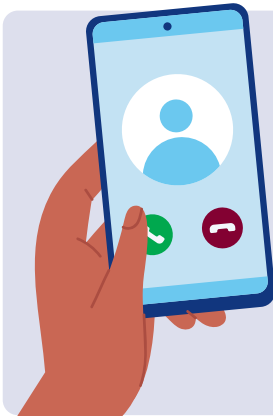
Do not drive on the day of your appointment and we recommend that you avoid driving for 48 hours if possible, however if you do you must take extra care when braking.

We also recommend that you do not use public transport, but you can use a taxi service. If you need to use public transport, we strongly recommend that someone is with you when you travel in case you begin to feel unwell.

For the next few days, avoid any long periods of standing, walking, or driving.

The local anaesthetic you were given will wear off in a couple of hours and you may feel sore. If you are feeling uncomfortable, take over the counter pain relief such as paracetamol and ibuprofen (providing you are not allergic or intolerant to them or have been advised by a health professional to avoid taking. Some people should avoid using ibuprofen and others should use it with caution). Always follow the dosage instructions on the packet and don't exceed the recommended maximum dose. Do not take aspirin as this can increase the risk of bleeding (please note, if you take aspirin for medical reasons, we will discuss this further with you).

Cooling down the sore area can also help reduce pain and swelling. Hold an ice pack, wrapped in a clean towel, against the sore area. Take care not to get the wound wet as this may affect the healing process and may cause infection.



### **Our vasectomy aftercare line**

If you have any questions, you can ask our team before leaving the clinic. You can also call our 24-hour aftercare line at any time on 0345 122 1441.

Our 24/7 aftercare team will be able to help and support with your post operative query. If deemed necessary, and based on the assessment, our aftercare team may signpost you to your GP, A&E or a specialist.

### **Bruising and swelling**

Most people having a vasectomy find they get some bruising around their scrotum, and this can spread to the penis, pubis and groin areas. Anti-inflammatory pain relief such as ibuprofen can help if you can take them. We strongly recommend that you rest regularly and avoid being too active.

You might notice that a small lump develops around the wound. This is nothing to worry about. This is your body's natural reaction to the healing process and does not need special treatment.

### **Caring for the wound**

As we only need to make a small puncture hole in the skin of your scrotum, your wound will be covered using just a simple dressing. The wound will heal from the inside – out so it may look as though the small puncture hole is still there a few days after your procedure, and this is completely normal.

The dressing should be kept dry and held in place for 48 hours by wearing tight-fitting, supportive underwear during the day and at night (one or two sizes smaller than usual). You will need enough pairs for at least seven days and nights following your appointment. This provides more support, can reduce pain and swelling, and will be more comfortable. Please avoid having a bath or shower during this period.

## RECOVERY AND AFTERCARE

48 hours after your procedure:

- have a short shower
- avoid long soaks in the bath for at least 2 weeks following your procedure, or until the wound has healed
- do not use toiletries such as bath oils or talcum powder as they can irritate the area
- dry the area thoroughly. Put on the clean dressing you were given. You can resume sexual activity as soon as it feels comfortable to do so

Please make sure that you use contraception until we confirm in writing that your vasectomy has been successful. Remember, only condoms help to protect against the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

### Physical recovery

You should be fit enough to get back to everyday tasks after a couple of days. **If your daily tasks are physically demanding, you should wait a little longer. If you have a job that involves heavy lifting, we recommend that you only return to work if you are able to avoid the physical tasks for 2 weeks.**

Please call us for advice if you are unsure if your particular type of work or activity could affect your recovery.

### Sport

Avoid all forms of sport and physical exercise for at least 2 weeks following the procedure.

Heavy physical exercise and contact sports should be avoided for 4 weeks. Examples include rugby, football, squash, cycling, skiing and going to the gym.

You can judge your recovery by how quickly your wound is healing and how fast any swelling or pain goes away.

You can have a conversation with our clinical teams on the day of your procedure, and if you are in doubt, please call us for advice.

### Alcohol

You should not drink alcohol for 48 hours after your procedure.

### Flying

We recommend that you avoid:

- short haul flights (up to 3 hours) for 48 hours after your vasectomy
- long haul flights for at least a week after your vasectomy

# POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

**A vasectomy is a very safe procedure. However, there are some possible complications or risks, as with any type of surgery.**

## Infection

As with all surgical procedures, there is a risk of infection. The risk of infection can be minimised by making sure that hands are washed before and after touching the wound site, and that the area is kept clean and dry.

**To help reduce the risk of infection prior to your surgical procedure we recommend you purchase Octenisan wash lotion 500mls, readily available online and in high street pharmacies. This product is a mild, antimicrobial wash lotion for skin and hair and helps to reduce the colonisation of skin with bacteria prior to surgical procedures.**

Please use for 5 days prior to your vasectomy surgical procedure (the instructions for use are on the product).

## Signs of infection

- the area becomes very painful, red, swollen or tender
- the wound has coloured discharge, which may or may not smell
- you have a raised temperature
- you feel generally unwell

If you notice any of the above signs of infection, please contact our aftercare line and our team will be able to support and provide advice.

If deemed necessary, and based on the assessment, our aftercare team may signpost you to your GP, A&E or a specialist.



## POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

### Haematomas

In some cases, a small blood vessel can bleed inside the scrotum and this forms a clot. These clots are usually small but on occasions, they can lead to severe swelling and discomfort requiring further medical attention. This can happen from a few hours to several days after your treatment. As these clots can result from heavy lifting or physical activity, we advise you to avoid these for at least two weeks after your treatment.

#### Signs of haematomas

- scrotum significantly increasing in size
- widespread worsening bruising over the penis, scrotum or inner thighs
- a heavy/ tugging sensation in one or both sides of the scrotum
- pain doesn't improve after pain relief

### Pain

A small number of people have been known to have long term or intermittent pain after a vasectomy. This has occurred in very few vasectomies performed at MSI Reproductive Choices UK. If you have any concerns, please call our 24-hour aftercare line on 0345 122 1441.

### Bleeding

On the day of your treatment, your dressing will be checked to assess the blood loss before you leave the clinic. On some occasions, the wound may bleed persistently once you leave the clinic; if this is the case, you can stop the blood flow by pinching the skin around the wound firmly for about 5 minutes (please ensure your wash your hands thoroughly beforehand). If the bleeding persists despite this, and if you notice the size of your scrotum increases rapidly, please contact our aftercare line and seek urgent medical attention.

Please note, it is not uncommon to observe some blood in your semen in your first few ejaculations following a vasectomy. This is normal as long as you have no symptoms of infection (please refer to our signs of infection guidance).



## Prolonged bruising

Bruising does not usually cause any further problems. On occasions, the bruising can extend to your entire scrotum, penis, inner thighs and pubis. Bruising will disappear over time. If the bruising is accompanied with significant swelling, please call our aftercare line for advice.

## Lumps

You may feel a small lump at the site of the procedure on one or both sides. This may be due to scarring of the tubes.

Sperm can leak from the sealed tubes (vas deferens) and form a small lump, known as a sperm granuloma, in the scrotum. These lumps are not usually painful and can often be treated with anti-inflammatory pain relief such as ibuprofen.

If the lump becomes larger and/or painful, and if you feel concerned, please call our aftercare line for advice.

## Failure rates

### Early failure – (Less than 1 in 100 people)

There is a possibility that the treatment will not be successful. This will be picked up during the semen testing you have after your procedure. If this happens, a repeat procedure would be advised and we would arrange this for you free of charge.

### Late failure – (1 in 2000 people)

This means that the tubes (vas deferens) have re-joined over time. This can happen up to 10 years after a vasectomy. It is possible for this to happen, but it is very rare.

Unfortunately, there is no way of knowing that this is going to happen, and it would only be discovered by an unintended pregnancy. For extra peace of mind, we can provide semen testing at any point after your vasectomy, for a small charge. For more information on semen testing, see page 10.



# SEMEN TESTING

**To make sure that your vasectomy procedure has been successful, we need to test your semen in a laboratory.**

After your vasectomy procedure, you will be given one aftercare and semen testing kit. The kit will come with instructions and a return envelope.

You need to provide one semen sample 16 weeks after your vasectomy. Before you give your sample, you need to have had at least 20 ejaculations since the vasectomy (then abstain for 2 to 7 days before providing the sample). This is to make sure there is no sperm, or very few sperm remaining in the tubes.

If your test results are not clear, you may need to give further samples. Our results team will discuss this with you. We will write to you to confirm that your vasectomy has been successful.

Until you receive confirmation, you should use another form of contraception to prevent pregnancy.



## Aftercare and semen testing pack

### Your pack will contain:

2 non-spermicidal condoms



1 semen collecting kit that contains

- 1 small clear sample pot
- 1 sample transport bag
- 1 rigid cardboard box



2 dressings (to replace the old ones)



1 laboratory slip and  
1 pre-printed label



1 pre-paid laboratory envelope



If anything is missing from your pack, or if you have any questions about your semen testing kit, you can contact our dedicated team by emailing [testresultsadmin@msichoice.org.uk](mailto:testresultsadmin@msichoice.org.uk) or calling 0345 120 3641 (available 8am to 4pm, Monday to Friday). When ready, your sample can be dropped in the post box.

**Please note:** For your sample to be considered valid for testing, there can't be more than 5 days between the sample date and the delivery to the laboratory. To ensure that your sample is delivered to the laboratory within the correct timeframes for testing, we would recommend posting at the beginning of the week to avoid potential delays.

## Semen sample testing instructions

1. Please make sure you ejaculate in the 7 days before you give your sample, but not **in the 48 hours before giving your sample**. This is because ejaculating/having sex less than 48 hours before collecting your sample can cause low volume, low numbers of sperm and abnormal appearance of sperm.

2. As part of your semen testing kit, you will find:

- A pre-printed label: this includes information such as your name, date of birth and client number.
- You need to fill out this label by adding date and time of the ejaculation.
- A pre filled laboratory slip: again, this will include information such as your name, date of birth and client number. You need to fill out this label by adding:
  - date and time of the ejaculation,
  - your signature

**Please note:** If you do not include the date of your ejaculation, or your signature on the laboratory slip, the laboratory will consider the sample invalid.

Surname <u>Smith</u>		Forename <u>John</u>	
Ward <u>Urology</u>		Hosp. No. <u>1234567</u>	
Sample Type <u>Semen</u>		D.O.B. <u>01/01/1957</u>	
Date <u>20/07/2020</u>		Time <u>14:30</u>	
<small>Please write your name otherwise tests will be void This label will attach to your sample pot This slip will stay inside the sample pot</small>			



**Post-Vasectomy Semen Testing Centre - Laboratory Slip**

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Patient Name: test test  
 Date of Birth: 1/1/1957  
 Centre attended: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Patient ID: 2049090

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**PLEASE ENSURE COMPLETE BELOW**  
 Date (DDMMYYYY) and time of ejaculation: \_\_\_\_\_

**I confirm that**  
 I have abstained from sex and masturbation for at least 48 hours (but no more than 7 days) before collecting this sample

**I have collected all of the ejaculate into the pot**  
**I also declare that all the information given above is accurate**

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please Remember  
 - Collect the ejaculate and post your sample on the same day.  
 - Post the sample between Monday and Friday. This is to make sure the sample is analysed in the laboratory within 24 hours.  
 - Enter date of the ejaculation on the laboratory slip and the sample pot.  
 - Enclose this completed slip with the sample pot.  
 - If you collected the ejaculate in the condom, please do not leave the condom in the sample pot.

Failure to supply all information requested on this slip and on the sample pot will result in the sample being invalid.

If you have any questions about your semen sample, please call the MSI UK Reproductive Choices Vasectomy Department on 0345 120 3641

3. Pass urine, then wash your hands and genitals with soap and water, ensuring all soap is washed off.

4. Ensure you collect all of the sample, especially the first sperm rich portion. You must make sure that all the ejaculate is collected in the sample pot provided. Your sample will be around a teaspoon of fluid. You can ejaculate:

- directly and fully into the pot, by masturbation (most suitable option),
- into the non-spermicidal condom provided and empty its entire contents into the sample pot. Dispose of the condom. Do not include it in the sample pot or the sample will be considered invalid for testing and you will be required to provide a new sample.

5. When all of the semen is in the sample pot, screw the lid on tightly. Firmly secure the lid of the pot before placing into the sample transport bag. Ensure to stick the pre-printed label on to the pot – this must be dated (dd/mm/yyyy) before sending.
6. Put the transport bag into the rigid cardboard box and close it. Put this and the completed and signed laboratory slip into the pre-paid laboratory envelope, making sure it is well sealed before posting.
7. Please make a note of your tracking number (either write it down or take a picture of it) so that you can easily track the delivery of your sample.
8. Drop your sample into the post box as soon as possible. Please remember: for your sample to be considered valid for testing, there can't be more than 5 days between the sample date and the delivery to the laboratory. We would recommend posting at the beginning of the week to avoid potential delays.

Please note, the instructions provided follow Royal Mail requirements for sending a biological sample. These specify that the packaging must consist of three components: (a) a primary receptacle(s); (b) a secondary packaging; and (c) a rigid outer packaging. Therefore, please ensure the sample is packed correctly before sending.

### **Semen testing collection don'ts**

- Do not use any form of lubrication.
- Do not use spermicidal condoms as this will kill the sperm, leading to a false result.
- Do not insert the condom with its content into the sample pot.
- Do not collect your sample by any form of unprotected sexual activity as this will cause a contamination of the sample.
- Do not scrape your sample into the pot from another surface as this will cause a contamination of your sample with bacteria and debris.

# GETTING YOUR RESULTS

**We will contact you by email (or we will send you a letter if we don't have an email address on your record), to let you know your results.**

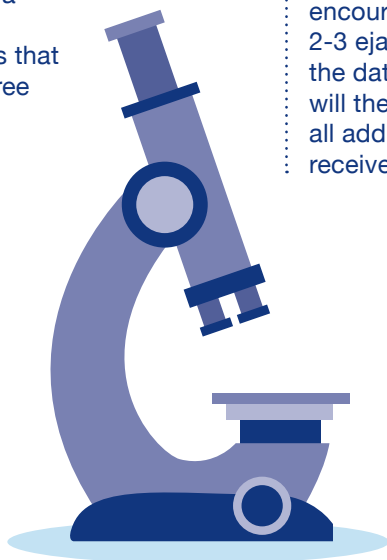
Please allow up to 10 working days (from the day the sample is received by the laboratory, which can be checked using the tracking number) for our teams to contact you with the results of your semen sample test.

You can contact our dedicated Test Results team by email **[testresultsadmin@msichoice.org.uk](mailto:testresultsadmin@msichoice.org.uk)** or you can call us on 0345 120 3641 (available 8am to 4pm, Monday to Friday).

You will receive a clearance result if the test shows that your semen is free from sperm.

Occasionally, you may have persistent sperm. This means that a very low number of sperm continues to be present in your semen and you need to provide further samples 22 weeks and then 28 weeks after your vasectomy. In rare cases, you may need to have a fresh semen sample test (analysed within an hour from ejaculation) to obtain a special clearance, if you have not been given clearance through postal samples, >+ 28 weeks after your vasectomy. Please note, this is usually arranged in collaboration with your GP.

If we need you to produce further semen samples, we will send you additional kits. The kit will contain further instructions and we would encourage clients to carry on with 2-3 ejaculations per week until the date of sample collection. We will then contact you again when all additional samples have been received and analysed.





**We hope this booklet has answered all of your questions. If you have any other questions, you can call us any time, day or night.**

**Aftercare line (24 hours):**

0345 122 1441

[services@msichoices.org.uk](mailto:services@msichoices.org.uk)

[www.msichoices.org.uk](http://www.msichoices.org.uk)

**Tell us about your experience**

We are always striving to give the best possible service to our clients, and we welcome your views on your experience with us. Please scan this QR code to fill in our client feedback questionnaire.

