MSI UNITED KINGDOM
REPRODUCTIVE CHOICES

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 msichoices.org.uk.

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

Contents

Recovery and aftercare 04

Bruising and swelling 05

Caring for the wound 05

Physical recovery 06

Sport 06

Alcohol 06

Flying 06

Possible risks and complications 07

Infection 07

Haematomas 08

Pain 08

Bleeding 08

Prolonged bruising 09

Lumps 09

Failure rates 09

Semen testing 10

Semen sample testing pack 11

Semen sample testing instructions: dos and don'ts 12

Getting your results 14

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.

Wherever possible, arrange for someone to drive you to your appointment and home afterwards. If this is not possible, we recommend travelling by taxi rather than public transport. If you have no alternative but to use public transport, ensure that someone travels with you so they can assist you if you begin to feel unwell.

You should also avoid driving for 48 hours after your appointment, if possible. If you need to drive during this period, take extra care when braking.

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

The local anaesthetic you were given will wear off within 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, provided you are not allergic to or intolerant of these medications and have not been advised by a healthcare professional to avoid taking them. 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. 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, our aftercare team may signpost you to your GP, A&E department 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. 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.

48 hours after your procedure, have a short shower and dry the area thoroughly before applying the clean dressing you were given.

Do not use perfumed toiletries, bath oils or talcum powder as they can irritate the area. Avoid long soaks in the bath for at least two weeks following your procedure, or until the wound has healed.

You can resume sexual activity as soon as it feels comfortable to do so.

Please make sure that you use contraception until we confirm 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 two 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 two weeks following the procedure.

Heavy physical exercise and contact sports should be avoided for four 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.

For advice about a specific sport or activity, speak to our clinical team on the day of your procedure and, if you are in doubt, please call us for advice before participating.

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 risks and complications

A vasectomy is a very safe procedure. However, there are some possible risks or complications, 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 500 ml, 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 five days prior to your procedure, following the usage instructions on the product.

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, our aftercare team may signpost you to your GP, A&E department or a specialist.

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



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 of bruising over the penis, scrotum or inner thighs
- a heavy or 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 you 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 on page 7).

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 – (Fewer 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 2,000 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 has been successful, we need to test your semen in a laboratory.

After your procedure, you will be given an 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 your vasectomy, and then abstain for two to seven 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 contact 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



2 dressings (to replace the old ones)

1 semen collecting kit that contains:

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



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@msichoices.org.uk** or calling **0345 120 3641** (available 8am to 4pm, Monday to Friday). When ready, your sample can be dropped in a normal post box.

Please note: For your sample to be considered valid for testing, there can't be more than five 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 recommend posting at the beginning of the week, to avoid potential delays over the weekend.

Semen sample testing instructions

1 Please make sure you ejaculate in the seven days before you give your sample, but not **in the 48 hours before giving your sample**. This is because ejaculating or 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


MSI
REPRODUCTIVE CHOICES
Post-Vasectomy Semen Testing Centre - Laboratory Slip
PLEASE ENSURE COMPLETE BELOW

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.

3 Before you give your sample, 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
- 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 it into the sample transport bag. Ensure that you stick the pre-printed label 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 a post box as soon as possible. Please remember: for your sample to be considered valid for testing, there can't be more than five days between the sample date and the delivery to the laboratory. We 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. Please ensure the sample is packed correctly before sending.

Semen testing collection don'ts

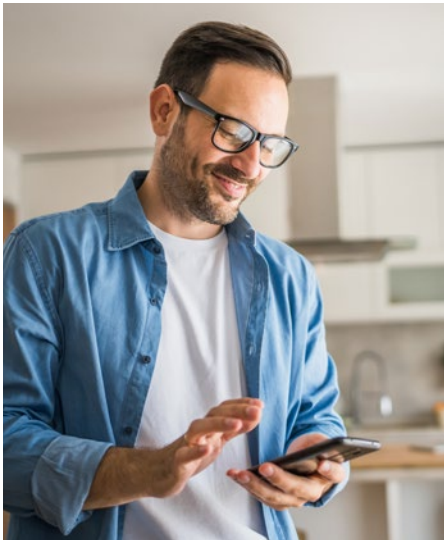
- ✗ Do not use any form of lubrication.
- ✗ Do not use spermicidal condoms as this will kill the sperm, leading to a false result.
- ✗ Do not insert the condom with its content into the sample pot.
- ✗ Do not collect your sample by any form of unprotected sexual activity as this will cause a contamination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

If your semen sample test shows that no sperm are present in your semen, you will receive a vasectomy clearance result by text message. We will contact you via the phone number you provided when booking your appointment.

If further testing is needed because sperm are still present in your sample, we will contact you by letter or email to confirm your results and any next steps. It is important that you consent for us to contact you using text, letter and email.

You can contact our dedicated test results team by email **testresultsadmin@msichoices.org.uk** or you can call us on **0345 120 3641** between 8am and 4pm, Monday to Friday.



Occasionally, a very small number of sperm may continue to be present in your semen. This is known as persistent sperm. If this happens, you will need to provide additional semen samples at 22 weeks and 28 weeks after your vasectomy.

If further semen samples are required, we will send you additional semen test kits and full instructions. We recommend that you ejaculate two to three times per week until you collect your next sample. We will contact you again once all additional samples have been received and analysed.

In rare cases, you may need to provide a fresh semen sample, which must be analysed within one to two hours of ejaculation, before special clearance can be given. This may be necessary if we have not been able to provide clearance from postal semen samples after 28 weeks following your vasectomy. If required, this test is usually arranged in collaboration with your GP or with alternative laboratories at a cost.



We hope this booklet has answered all your questions about your treatment and aftercare. 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
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.

YOUR CHOICE, OUR SUPPORT.

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REPRODUCTIVE CHOICES

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