

## Vasectomy – Patient Information

- A very effective method of contraception.
- Does not have any effect on masculinity, erection, ejaculation or hormones. Although semen does not contain sperm after a vasectomy, about the same amount of semen is ejaculated.
- The technique involves a simple operation whereby the tubes carrying sperm from the testes are cut, cauterised and tied. The procedure is carried out under local anaesthetic through a single small midline opening in the scrotum, performed as a non-scalpel technique. As the wound seals within twenty-four hours, no sutures are necessary. The testes will still produce sperm, which will be absorbed by your body.
- Infection, swelling or internal bleeding may occur occasionally, but seldom happens if you take things quietly for the first two days after the operation.

### Long Term Effects

#### Pain

As there is distension of the tubules in the epididymis (next to the testes), this may become tender and occasionally sperm may leak out of these tubules following minor injury. This may form a very tender lump (sperm granuloma) which usually disappears spontaneously or with treatment. In 1-3% of patients there may be ongoing tenderness or pain in the epididymis which may even necessitate surgery (either reversal of the vasectomy or removal of epididymis).

#### Prostate Cancer

Although some studies in patients with prostate cancer suggest a higher than normal incidence of previous vasectomies, this is most probably only coincidental and there is no scientific proof as to why a vasectomy should contribute to prostate cancer. Please check with your GP regarding prostate cancer screening.

#### Reversal

A vasectomy can be reversed, but only 40 – 50% of reversals will result in a pregnancy as people develop antibodies against their own sperm. However, semen may be frozen pre-operatively for later use. There are also some modern micro-techniques available to inject sperms, which are aspirated from the epididymis into egg cells.

#### Fertility

Fertility exists for at least six weeks (or approximately twenty-four ejaculations) after the vasectomy. Contraception should be used until it is confirmed by a sperm count that there are no sperm present in the semen. The first sperm count is done twelve weeks after the operation, followed by another count four weeks later. It sometimes may take up to three months to have a zero sperm count.

#### Failure

Failure due to spontaneous re-joining of the tubes occurs very seldom – about one in two thousand.

### Preparations for the Operation

- Hair at the front of the scrotum must be shaved from the base of the penis downwards, but not the pubic area – followed by a bath or shower.
- Both the man having the vasectomy as well as his wife or partner should understand the procedure as well as the consequences.