



## Sterilization for Males and Females

### What is Sterilization?

- It is an operation to prevent a woman from becoming pregnant, or a man from fathering a child.
- The procedure for women is called a tubal ligation (or “tying the tubes”). For men it is called a vasectomy.
- Both procedures are safe with few complications.
- These are permanent methods of birth control which are extremely effective. There is only a slight chance that pregnancy may occur after the procedures. (less than 1%)

### Things to Think About.

- Prior to sterilization, it is important to think about the risks of surgery (e.g. bleeding, anesthesia, infection) as well as possible benefits.
- There are many other nonpermanent options available for contraception which should also be considered, especially if you are young (less than 35 years old).

### Making the Decision.

People choose sterilization for a number of reasons including:

- The family is complete.
- There may be a medical problem which could make any future pregnancies dangerous for the mother or baby.
- They may not want to worry about birth control any longer.
- Inability to support more children.

### Sterilization for Women

- There are different ways in which tubal sterilization can be done. Your doctor and you must decide which method is best for you.
- The two methods used most often are **laparoscopy** or **minilaparotomy**. Minilaparotomies are performed commonly right after delivery.
- Tubal sterilization may be performed under general or local anesthesia. The anesthesia chosen depends on your medical history, the type of procedure used, your preference and your anesthesiologist's recommendation.
- Reversal of a tubal sterilization if a woman changes her mind is complex and not always successful. So, this procedure should be considered **permanent**.

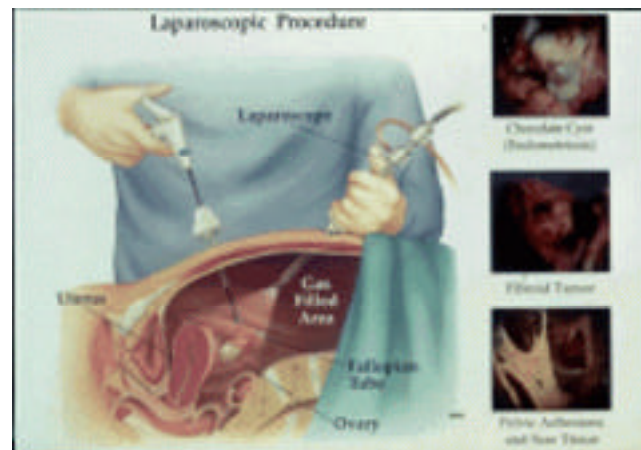


## What is a Laparoscopy ?

It is a procedure which involves using a laparoscope (a slender device like a telescope) which is inserted into the abdomen through a small incision under the belly button.

### *How is it done ?*

- An anesthetic is given and a small incision is made in the abdomen. Gas is then passed into the abdomen to inflate it slightly in order to lift the abdominal wall away from internal organs.
- A laparoscope is then inserted through the incision enabling the doctor to see the pelvic organs.
- A smaller device is usually inserted through another small incision to move and hold the tubes.
- The tubes are identified and may be sealed using various methods including clips, electrical burning, plastic rings, etc. Ask your doctor which method he/she plans to use and why.
- The gas is then allowed to escape from the abdomen and the incisions are closed with a few stitches.



**Laparoscopy**

### What is a Minilaparotomy ?

A minilaparotomy is an incision about 1 to 2 inches long made in the abdomen.

#### *How is it done ?*

- An anesthetic is given and a small incision is made above the pubic hairline or just under the belly button (if you have just delivered a baby).
- The doctor locates both tubes and pulls them upwards through the incision.
- Usually, a section of each tube will be removed. The ends of the tubes may be tied with surgical thread to close them. They may also be closed using heat which causes scarring, clips or plastic rings.
- The abdominal incision is closed with a few stitches.

#### *What about after the surgery ?*

- Side effects vary dependant upon the patient. They are similar with both procedures and can include: mild abdominal cramping, fatigue, bloating (may be worse after a laparoscopy). Most symptoms will resolve within 1 -3 days.
- Tubal sterilization is ***effective right away.***

If you get pregnant after a tubal ligation, it is more likely to be an ***ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy in the tube).*** ***You should seek medical care immediately if you miss a menstrual period.***

## Sterilization for Men

### *How is a vasectomy performed ?*

- A vasectomy is a simple and very effective procedure which may be done in an outpatient setting such as a doctor's office or hospital.
- Most men are surprised at the ease of the procedure.
- After cleaning the scrotum with an antiseptic, the doctor locates each vas in the scrotum. Then each side of the scrotum is numbed with a local anesthetic.
- Two small openings are made into the skin of the scrotum and each vas is pulled through the opening until it forms a loop.
- A small portion of the loop is cut and removed and the two ends are tied and sealed with heat so that scar tissue will grow to block the tubes. Each vas is then placed back into the scrotum.

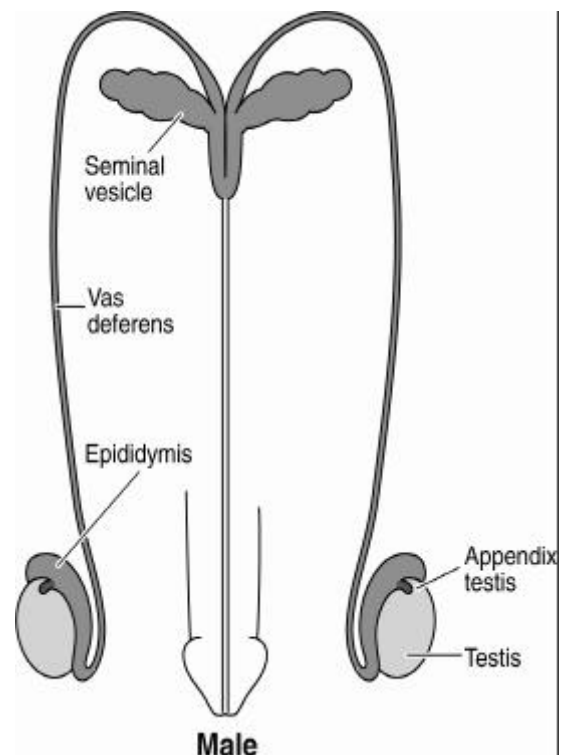
### *What about after the surgery ?*

- Usually the man is asked to apply ice packs & wear an athletic supporter ("jock strap") after the surgery. There may be some swelling and discomfort in the scrotum for 2 to 3 days.
- Unlike tubal sterilization in women, a vasectomy is ***not effective right away*** as some sperm may still be in the tubes. It usually takes about 2 to 3 months for the semen to become sperm free.

*"These surgeries do not affect either partner's ability to have or enjoy sex."*

### More Facts About Vasectomy

- A man can have sexual intercourse again as soon as he feels comfortable. After a vasectomy a man's sexual function should not change. He can still have an erection and ejaculate. Since sperm only make up about 5% of the semen, there is little difference in the amount of ejaculate.
- A man and his partner should use an additional form of birth control until his doctor has confirmed that the semen sample contains no sperm.
- Vasectomy is highly effective. Less than 1% of vasectomies fail to prevent pregnancy.
- Overall, a vasectomy is easier and has less risk than a tubal sterilization in a woman.
- A vasectomy does NOT protect a man against sexually transmitted diseases.
- Current research shows that the procedure does not increase the risk for prostate cancer.



### *What if a Man Changes His Mind After the Procedure?*

For men who change their minds and want to father a child again later in life, it may be possible to reverse the procedure, however, this is not always successful and a vasectomy should be considered permanent.