

## PATIENT INFORMATION

# VASECTOMY

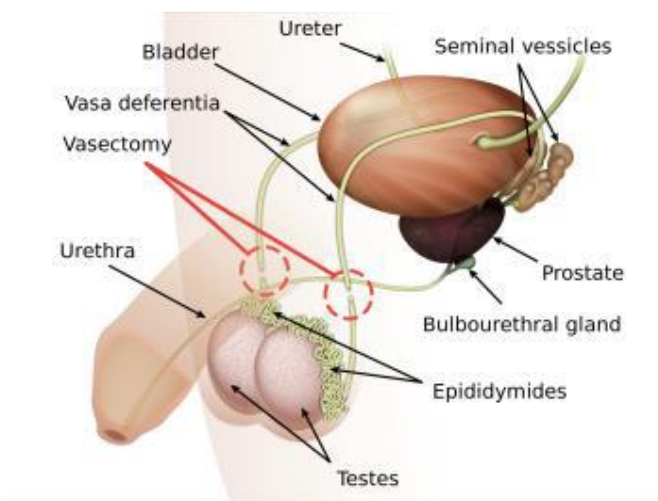


## Urology Department

This procedure involves removal of a small segment of vas (the tubes that delivers sperm) from both sides, as a method of male contraception.

Vasectomy should be regarded as an “irreversible” procedure. If you have any doubt about whether it is the option for you, you should not go ahead.

Under normal circumstances, vasectomy is not appropriate during pregnancy or within the first six months after the birth of a child.



This procedure can be done with local or general anaesthetic but, if your tubes are difficult to feel, general anaesthetic is preferred.

We use absorbable stitches to close the scrotal skin which disappear within two to three weeks.

This leaflet explains some of the benefits, risks and alternatives to the operation. We want you to have an informed choice so you can make the right decision. Please ask your surgical team about anything you do not fully understand or want us to explain in more detail.

We recommend that you read this leaflet carefully. You and your doctor (or other appropriate health professional) will also need to record that you agree to have the procedure by signing a consent form, which your health professional will give you.

### Benefits of the procedure

The aim of the procedure is to provide the most effective method of male sterilisation.

## Serious or frequent risks

- Everything we do in life has risks. The general risks of surgery include problems with:
  - breathing (for example, a chest infection);
  - the heart (for example, abnormal rhythm or, occasionally, a heart attack); and
  - blood clots (for example, in the legs or occasionally in the lung).

There are some risks associated with this type of surgery. Those specifically related to this procedure include:

### After-effect

Mild bruising and scrotal swelling with seepage of clear yellow fluid from the wound after a few days

### Risk

Almost all patients

Blood in your semen the first few times you ejaculate

Between 1 in 2 & 1 in 10 patients

Troublesome chronic testicular pain which can be severe enough to affect day-to-day activities

Between 1 in 7 & 1 in 20 patients

Significant bruising and scrotal swelling requiring surgical drainage

Between 1 in 10 & 1 in 50 patients

Epididymo-orchitis (infection or inflammation of your testicle)

Between 1 in 10 & 1 in 50 patients

Early failure (post-operative semen analysis shows persistent motile sperms) so that you are not sterile

1 in 250 patients

Late failure (re-joining of the ends of the tubes after initial negative sperm counts) resulting in fertility & pregnancy at a later stage

1 in 2000 patients

## Hospital-acquired infection

- Colonisation with MRSA (0.9% - 1 in 110).
- Clostridium difficile bowel infection (0.01% - 1 in 10,000).
- MRSA bloodstream infection (0.02% - 1 in 5000).

The rates for hospital-acquired infection may be greater in high-risk patients, for example those patients

- with long-term drainage tubes;
- who have had their bladder removed due to cancer;
- who have had a long stay in hospital; or
- who have been admitted to hospital many times.

### **Other procedures that are available**

Alternatives to this procedure include other form of contraception (both male and female).

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT SPERM COUNTS**

Until you get notification that you are “all clear” on your semen sample, you **MUST** continue with your contraceptive precautions; until you have received this notification, you cannot rely on your vasectomy because you may not be sterile

### **Your pre-operative assessment**

Before you are admitted for your operation, you may be required to attend for a pre-operative assessment, to ensure that you are fit for surgery. It is important that you attend for this appointment to avoid delaying your surgery.

Not all patients require a detailed pre-operative assessment and a health questionnaire is used to determine which patients require a full assessment. You may therefore be asked to complete a health questionnaire immediately after you have been listed for your surgery. The health questionnaire may be on paper or on a tablet/computer. The information required includes all medical conditions, regular medications, allergies to medications and your previous anaesthetic history. The information you give us will be reviewed by the pre-operative assessment team. If you do not require further assessment you will then be given a date for surgery. If you require further assessment you will be given an appointment to attend the pre-operative assessment clinic.

At the clinic, the nursing staff will confirm the medical information you have previously given. You will likely have an examination of your heart and lungs and some further tests may be required, such as a blood test, X-ray, heart test or lung test. If a more detailed assessment or discussion is required you may see an anaesthetist prior to your admission for surgery. This may require an additional appointment.

If you are taking prescribed medicines please bring a copy of your repeat prescription to your appointment and a copy of the operation consent form (if you were provided with a copy at your out-patient appointment).

Following your assessment, the staff will provide you with written information regarding preparation for your surgery and a point of contact. It is important that you follow the fasting instructions given on your admission letter.

### **Being admitted to the ward**

You will usually be admitted on the day of your surgery. You will be welcomed on to the ward and your details checked. We will fasten an armband containing your hospital information to your wrist.

You will usually be asked to continue with your normal medication during your stay in hospital, so please bring it with you, in the green bag provided for you at pre-operative assessment.

### **Your anaesthetic**

Your surgery will usually be carried out under a general anaesthetic. This means that you will be asleep during your operation and you will feel nothing. Alternatively a spinal anaesthetic (a spinal) may be used for this type of operation.

### **Before you come into hospital**

There are some things you can do to prepare yourself for your operation and reduce the chance of difficulties with the anaesthetic.

- If you smoke, consider giving up for several weeks before the operation. Smoking reduces the amount of oxygen in your blood and increases the risks of breathing problems during and after an operation.
- If you are overweight, many of the risks of anaesthesia are increased. Reducing your weight will help.
- If you have loose or broken teeth or crowns that are not secure, you may want to visit your dentist for treatment. The anaesthetist will usually want to put an airway in your mouth to help you breathe. If your teeth are not secure, they may be damaged.
- If you have long-standing medical problems, such as diabetes, hypertension (high blood pressure), asthma or epilepsy, you should consider asking your GP to give you a check-up.
- If you become unwell or develop a cough or cold the week before your surgery please contact the pre-operative assessment team on the number provided. Depending on your illness and how urgent your surgery is, we may need to delay your operation as it may be better for you to recover from this illness before your surgery.

### **Your pre-surgery visit by the anaesthetist**

- After you come into hospital, the anaesthetist will come to see you and ask you questions about:

- your general health and fitness;
  - any serious illnesses you have had;
  - any problems with previous anaesthetics;
  - medicines you are taking;
  - allergies you have;
  - chest pain;
  - shortness of breath;
  - heartburn;
  - problems with moving your neck or opening your mouth; and
  - any loose teeth, caps, crowns or bridges.
- Your anaesthetist will discuss with you the different methods of anaesthesia they can use. After talking about the benefits, risks and your preferences, you can then decide together what is best for you.

## **On the day of your operation**

### **Nothing to eat and drink (nil by mouth)**

It is important that you follow the instructions we give you about eating and drinking. We will ask you not to eat or drink anything for six hours before your operation. This is because any food or liquid in your stomach could come up into the back of your throat and go into your lungs while you are being anaesthetised. You may take a few sips of plain water up to two hours before your operation so you can take any medication tablets.

### **Your normal medicines**

Continue to take your normal medicines up to and including the day of your surgery. If we do not want you to take your normal medication, your surgeon or anaesthetist will explain what you should do. It is important to let us know if you are taking anticoagulant drugs (for example, warfarin, aspirin, clopidogrel, prasugrel, apixaban or dabigatran).

### **Your anaesthetic**

When it is time for your operation, a member of staff will take you from the ward to the operating theatre. They will take you into the anaesthetic room and the anaesthetist will get you ready for your anaesthetic.

To monitor you during your operation, your anaesthetist will attach you to a machine to watch your heart, your blood pressure and the oxygen level in your blood.

## **General anaesthetic**

General anaesthesia usually starts with an injection of medicine into a vein. A thin plastic tube (venflon) will be placed in a vein in your arm or hand and the medicines will be injected through the tube. Sometimes you will be asked to breathe a mixture of gases and oxygen through a mask to give the same effect.

## **Spinal anaesthetic**

A spinal anaesthetic involves the injection of a local anaesthetic drug through a needle into the small of your back to numb the nerves from the waist down to the toes for 2 – 3 hours. You will be asked to either sit on the side of the bed with your feet on a low stool or lie on your side, curled up with your knees tucked up towards your chest. You will remain awake during this procedure. You may feel some discomfort in your lower back or legs whilst the anaesthetic is being injected. The anaesthetic staff will support and reassure you during the procedure. As the spinal begins to take effect your anaesthetist will measure its progress and test its effectiveness. A spinal should cause you no unpleasant feelings and usually takes only a few minutes to perform. Once the injection is finished you will normally be asked to lie flat as the spinal works quickly and is usually effective within 5 – 10 minutes. Your skin will initially feel numb to touch and your leg muscles will feel weak. Once the injection is working fully you will be unable to move your legs or feel any pain below the waist.

Your anaesthetist will ensure that you are comfortable throughout the procedure.

## **Local Anaesthetic**

You will need two injections of local anaesthetic, one on each side. Once this has worked, your skin will be numb and you will not feel anything sharp or painful; you will still feel sensations of touch, hot and cold. When the surgeon picks up each tube in turn, you may get a little discomfort; this can make you feel light-headed, sweaty and slightly sick but subsides very quickly.

## **Pain relief after surgery**

Pain relief is important to aid your recovery from surgery. This may be in the form of tablets, suppositories or injections. Once you are comfortable and have recovered safely from your anaesthetic, we will take you back to the ward. The ward staff will continue to monitor you and assess your pain relief. They will ask you to describe any pain you have using the following scale.

- 0 = No pain
- 1 = Mild pain
- 2 = Moderate pain
- 3 = Severe pain

It is important that you report any pain you have as soon as you experience it.

## **What are the risks?**

The risk to you as an individual will depend on whether you have any other illness, personal factors, such as smoking or being overweight and surgery that is complicated or prolonged.

General anaesthesia is safer than it has ever been. If you are normally fit and well, your risk of dying from any cause while under anaesthetic is less than one in 250,000. This is 25 times less likely than dying in a car accident. The side effects of having a general anaesthetic include drowsiness, nausea (feeling sick), muscle pain, sore throat and headache. There is also a small risk of dental damage.

The side effects of having a spinal anaesthetic are headache, low blood pressure, itching of the skin due to the drugs injected and temporary difficulty in passing urine. Rare complications of a spinal anaesthetic are temporary loss of sensation in your legs, 'pins and needles' or muscle weakness in your legs. Permanent damage to the nerves is very rare.

Your anaesthetist will discuss the risks with you and will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

## **After your surgery**

- You will be taken to the recovery room to the general or day care ward. You will need to rest until the effects of the anaesthetic have worn off. You will have a drip in your arm to keep you well-hydrated.
- Your anaesthetist will arrange for you to have painkillers for the first few days after the operation.
- You will be encouraged to get out of bed and move around as soon as possible, as this helps prevent chest infections and blood clots.
- Your surgical team will assess your progress and answer any questions you have about the operation.

## **Leaving hospital**

### **❖ Length of stay**

How long you will be in hospital varies from patient to patient and depends on how quickly you recover from the operation and the anaesthetic. Most patients having this type of surgery will leave hospital on the day of the procedure.

### **❖ Medication when you leave hospital**

Before you leave hospital, the pharmacy will give you any extra medication that you need to take when you are at home.



### ❖ **Convalescence**

How long it takes for you to fully recover from your surgery varies from person to person. It can take up to two weeks before healing occurs. After you return home, you will need to take it easy and should expect to get tired to begin with.

There will be marked swelling of the penis after a few days. This will last three to four days and will then subside; do not be alarmed because this is expected. If you develop a temperature, increased redness, throbbing or drainage at the site of the operation, please contact your GP.

### ❖ **Stitches**

Dissolvable stitches are routinely used. They will dissolve or fall out in about 3-4 weeks.

### ❖ **Personal hygiene**

You can continue to shower as normal after you leave hospital.

### ❖ **Diet**

You don't usually need to follow a special diet. If you need to change what you eat, we will give you advice before you go home.

### ❖ **Exercise**

We recommend that you avoid strenuous exercise and heavy lifting for up to 2-3 weeks. We encourage lighter exercise, such as walking and light housework, as soon as you feel well enough.

### ❖ **Sex**

You should refrain from sexual intercourse for a minimum of four weeks.

### ❖ **Driving**

You should not drive until you feel confident that you could perform an emergency stop without discomfort – probably at least one to two weeks after your operation. It is your responsibility to check with your insurance company regarding your insurance cover following an operation.

### ❖ **Work**

How long you will need to be away from work varies depending on:

- how serious the surgery is;
- how quickly you recover;
- whether or not your work is physical; and
- whether you need any extra treatment after surgery.

Most people will not be fully back to work for two weeks. If you need a medical sick note for the time you are in hospital and for the first three to four weeks after you leave, please ask us.

### ❖ **Outpatient appointment**

You will not normally be given a follow-up outpatient appointment after circumcision unless this is felt necessary by your consultant.

### **Contact details**

If you have any specific concerns that you feel have not been answered and need explaining, please contact the following.

- Urology Nurse Specialist Helpline 01905760809  
(Monday - Thursday 08.30 - 16.30 and Friday 08.30 - 13.00)
- Alexandra Hospital:
  - Secretaries: 01527 512155
  - Ward 17 Nursing Staff: 01527 512045 or 01527 503030 ext: 44045 or 44046
  - Ward 14 Nursing Staff: 01527 507967 or 01527 503030 ext: 44032 or 47967
  - Sharon Banyard, Laura Grazier Urology Nurse Specialist
  - Jackie Askew, Uro-oncology Macmillan Nurse Specialist
- Kidderminster Hospital and Treatment Centre:
  - Secretaries: 01562 513097
  - Penny Templey, Aimee England, Urology Nurse Specialist
  - Sarah Holloway and Kerry Holden, Nurse Specialist – Survivorship Programme: 01562 512328
- Worcestershire Royal Hospital:
  - Secretaries: 01905 760766
  - Helen Worth, Emma Hurton, Lisa Hammond, Urology Nurse Specialists

### **Other information**

The following internet websites contain information that you may find useful.

- [www.worcsacute.nhs.uk](http://www.worcsacute.nhs.uk)  
Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust
- [www.patient.co.uk](http://www.patient.co.uk)  
Information factsheets on health and disease
- [www.rcoa.ac.uk](http://www.rcoa.ac.uk)  
Information leaflets by the Royal College of Anaesthetists about 'Having an anaesthetic'
- [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)  
On-line health encyclopaedia

- [www.baus.org.uk](http://www.baus.org.uk)

Information from The British Association of Urological Surgeons

**If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.**

### **Patient Experience**

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

### **Feedback**

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

### **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

### **How to contact PALS:**

**Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: [wah-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:wah-tr.PET@nhs.net)**

### **Opening times:**

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Thursday from 8.30am to 4.30pm and Friday: 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that a voicemail service is in use at busy times, but messages will be returned as quickly as possible.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.