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Vasectomy

Vasectomy is a short, outpatient procedure done for male sterilization.

The procedure is done in an ambulatory facility. Local anesthesia and some sedation is used for patient comfort. The procedure itself takes approximately 30 minutes to complete. The patient must have a ride home afterward.

Vasectomy is done by making two small incisions in the front of the scrotum and removing short pieces of the vas deferens (the tube that carries sperm from the testicles). Dissolving sutures are used to close so that no suture removal is required later. A soft dressing is held in place with an athletic supporter after the surgery for one or two days.

Most men take the day off from work and return to normal activities the next day. Some bruising and swelling is normal and clears quickly. Patients are always sent home with prescriptions for pain medication.

The scrotum should be kept dry for one day after the procedure. Sex may be restarted in several days. Birth control measures must be used for at least six weeks after the procedure. At that time the patient is asked to bring a semen specimen into the lab for analysis. If all of the sperm are gone, unprotected intercourse may be resumed. If there are still sperm in the specimen, birth control must be used until another specimen done at a later date is clear.

Failure with the procedure is rare. It is usually due to resumption of unprotected intercourse before the semen analysis shows that no sperm are present. It is the responsibility of the patient to make sure that this does not happen.