

A photograph of a family. A man in a light blue polo shirt is smiling and embracing a woman. In the foreground, a young girl with brown hair is smiling. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting with greenery.

**Vasectomy.
Your questions
answered.**



**MARIE STOPES
INTERNATIONAL**

About us.

Marie Stopes International provides sexual health and pregnancy choices worldwide.

Our caring and committed team ensures every client receives immediate help and support in a non-judgmental, personalised and confidential manner.

Marie Stopes International centres in Australia offer a broad range of sexual and reproductive healthcare services to men and women, including: abortion, vasectomy, contraception and STI check-ups.

Our Global Partnership.

Marie Stopes International in Australia is part of the global Marie Stopes International partnership – a UK based registered charity providing a full range of reproductive healthcare services in over 40 countries.

Marie Stopes International was established in London in 1976, and grew out of the organisation originally set up by Dr Marie Stopes – the family planning pioneer who opened the UK's first family planning clinic in 1921.

PROVIDING CHOICES IN REPRODUCTIVE



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About this booklet.

Vasectomy is the only permanent method of male contraception, with over a 99% success rate. It is safe, simple, effective and ideal for men who have completed their families or for those who do not want to have any children.

This information booklet aims to answer some frequently asked questions about vasectomy. Our highly trained team members will ensure that all formalities are completed as smoothly as possible, and we encourage you to ask as many questions as necessary to feel completely comfortable and confident in your decision. If you require more information, please contact our 24 hour National Support Centre on **Freecall 1800 003 707** or visit our online vasectomy chat service at **www.vasectomyinfo.com.au**.

RIE STOPES

What is vasectomy – how does it work?

Vasectomy is the common name for male sterilisation – a permanent method of contraception. It is a simple surgical procedure which closes off the sperm-carrying tubes (vas deferens) in the scrotum to prevent sperm from getting into the seminal fluid you ejaculate. After the procedure, sperm produced in the testicles can no longer travel through these tubes to mix with semen, thereby the seminal fluid gradually becomes free of sperm. It usually does not require a general anaesthetic and can be carried out in less than 30 minutes by a highly trained doctor. Please allow longer if you are undergoing IV sedation or a general anaesthetic for recovery time.

How do I make an appointment?

To make an immediate and confidential appointment, please contact our 24 hour National Support Centre on **Freecall 1800 003 707** or visit **www.vasectomyinfo.com.au** to make an online booking. When making an appointment, one of our team members will give you details about the location of your closest Marie Stopes International centre, how to prepare for your procedure, what you need to bring and the fees involved. At the time of booking, you will be asked to pay a \$100 deposit. We can process credit cards over the telephone, online or you can make the payment at one of our centres. The deposit is non-refundable if you cancel your appointment with less than **48 hours** notice. On the day of your appointment, you will be asked to pay the balance. Please note that we do not accept cheques, AMEX or Diners Club cards.

What if I don't have a Medicare card?

If you don't have a Medicare card, contact Medicare on **13 20 11** to see if you are eligible. If you cannot present a Medicare card, non-Medicare fees will apply.

Is vasectomy reversible?

You should consider vasectomy as a permanent method of contraception. Only men who are absolutely certain they do not want to have any more children, or any children at all, should have the procedure. If you think you might change your mind, you and your partner should consider an alternative method of contraception and wait until you are definite about your decision, as there is no guarantee a vasectomy can be reversed.

How is the vasectomy procedure carried out?

A local anaesthetic injection numbs the area and then a very small incision is made in the front of the scrotum. Through this opening, each vas deferens is cut and sealed off. Once this heals you will have a very small scar on the scrotum which will become invisible over time.

How do I have to prepare for my procedure?

In order to prepare for your vasectomy, please follow these important instructions:

- Do not use painkillers, with the exception of Panadeine®, 24 hours before your procedure. If you are taking aspirin or any anti-inflammatories, this must be stopped 1 week before your procedure after consultation with your doctor.
- Do not drink alcohol before your procedure.
- You must not shave the operative area.
- Shower the evening before, and again on the day of your procedure.
- Wear firm fitting underwear on the day of your procedure (ie: do not wear boxer shorts).
- If you choose to undergo either conscious IV sedation or a general anaesthetic you must not eat anything (including lollies or gum) for 6 hours prior to your appointment. You may drink small amounts of water only, but no other fluid, up to 2 hours before your appointment.

If you are unsure or need further clarification, please contact our 24 hour National Support Centre on Freecall 1800 003 707.

What can I expect from a typical appointment?

All men have a pre-operative consultation with a nurse/doctor to discuss the decision and to talk about the procedure. This is a chance for you to ask any questions or raise any concerns you may have. Your partner is very welcome to attend this session with you.

Following the procedure, Marie Stopes International provides an aftercare service and advice free of charge when required. The vasectomy aftercare booklet you will receive explains exactly what to do if you are concerned about anything following your vasectomy.

Does the vasectomy work straight away?

NO, you won't be sterile right away. There will be some sperm left in the upper part of the vas deferens, beyond the blockage at the vasectomy site. These sperm are gradually cleared after ejaculation over some weeks. You will still need to use another method of contraception for a few months until your doctor informs you that your semen is free of sperm.

Following the vasectomy, we will ask you to supply a semen sample around three months after the procedure, which is checked under a microscope to see if there are sperm present. **This test is very important!** It can take quite a number of ejaculations to clear the tubes of sperm completely, so we may have to ask for more samples. When you have given a semen sample which has no sperm present, we'll write and inform you that your vasectomy has been a success. Note that frequent ejaculations assist in faster clearance of sperm from your tubes. **You may be required to submit further samples until the semen is clear.** It is important to note that even once you've been given clearance, there is still a small chance of **late failure**. This will be explained during your pre-operative consult.

How effective is vasectomy?

Vasectomy is probably the most effective method of contraception that exists. The failure rate is much less than 1%. Sometimes the sperm-carrying tubes can re-join, however this risk diminishes rapidly as healing proceeds. Eighty percent of potential failures occur within three months of the procedure, so it is important to carry out the semen test at this time. If sperm is present, we will repeat the vasectomy at no cost.

What are the risks of a vasectomy?

Vasectomy has some risks, as does any surgery. However, most men have no problems, and most problems that may occur are not serious and can be treated. Vasectomy is a common, simple and safe procedure, and long-term adverse effects are very rare.

Risks that may occur include:

Infection:

A small risk associated with any surgery is infection, but this can easily be treated with antibiotics.

Swelling/bruising:

It is common to experience a little swelling or bruising which can be relieved with painkillers and an ice pack. A small, pea-sized lump may develop at the operation site and remain a while. This is your body's natural reaction to the healing process and needs no treatment.

Bleeding:

You may sometimes get a small amount of bleeding. This might form a swelling deep inside the scrotum, referred to as a haematoma, particularly if you've been doing any hard, physical activity like sport. A haematoma may be painful but usually goes away over time and responds to simple treatment such as pain-relief.

Post-procedure pain:

A very small number of men have been known to experience testicular pain for several years following a vasectomy. However, we stress that this is extremely rare.

How will vasectomy affect my body?

Your testicles will continue to produce sperm but, because the sperm can't get through the tubes any more, they simply get reabsorbed into the body. Vasectomy does not affect your male hormones, nor does it effect ejaculation. The only difference when you ejaculate is that there will be no sperm present in the fluid.

Will having a vasectomy affect my sex life?

With no change to your hormones, ejaculation or orgasm, there's no reason why having a vasectomy should have a negative impact on your sex life. In fact, many couples find vasectomy improves their sex life, enjoying greater sexual freedom once they no longer have the worry of an unplanned pregnancy.

Does vasectomy increase the risk of cancer?

There is no conclusive evidence linking vasectomy to cancer of the prostate or testicles. However we advise all men, whether or not they have had a vasectomy, to have regular health screenings. It is also important to get into the habit of regularly checking your own testicles for lumps.

Are there any alternatives to vasectomy?

There are still very few methods of contraception for men - either vasectomy or condoms. However there is a permanent sterilisation procedure for women – female sterilisation. There are also other very effective long-term (but not permanent) alternatives your partner could use. These include IUDs, contraceptive implants or injections. If you have doubts about whether or not you will want to have children in the future, you should choose one of the non-permanent, more short-term methods such as the pill or condoms. Marie Stopes International will be able to advise you and your partner on alternative contraceptive methods to suit your circumstances.

Will a vasectomy protect me against a sexually transmitted infection?

No. Vasectomy cannot protect you against HIV or sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Condoms are still the best protection against STIs if you are sexually active.

Do I need my partner's consent to have a vasectomy?

Only you can decide whether or not to have a vasectomy - our service is completely confidential. If you are in a relationship however, we would always advise that you discuss such an important decision with your partner.

Is my medical history important?

Any man can have a vasectomy, but we do need to know about any previous surgery on your testicles or about any procedures for hernia repair. Scar tissue from these procedures can make a vasectomy a little more complicated. Please also tell us of any other significant conditions such as chest or heart problems or other serious illness. It shouldn't affect your procedure, but it's important for your safety that we are aware of such conditions.

Does it hurt?

Each person is different and we cannot guarantee you will feel no discomfort. Generally speaking, the injection of local anaesthetic might mean a short, sharp pain, but it starts working straight away and will make the area feel numb. You may then have some sensation of the procedure, but this should not be painful. You may feel slight discomfort afterwards but your ordinary painkillers and cold packs will help and any soreness shouldn't last very long.

How much time will I need to take off?

You will only actually be at the centre for about an hour (longer if you undergo a general anaesthetic), but it's a good idea to take things easy for a day or two. You might want to take a couple of days off work. We are happy to give advice about your particular situation and can organise a medical certificate if required.

You can drive home after your procedure if you have had a local anaesthetic. If you have IV sedation or a general anaesthetic you should arrange for someone to collect you as you **cannot drive for 24 hours after the procedure.**

When can I play sport again?

Gentle exercise such as swimming can be resumed after the dressing is removed, but physical strenuous sports, particularly contact sports, should be avoided for at least two weeks or until you feel comfortable to do so. Please ask if you are unsure about any particular activity.

Online Vasectomy Webchat.

The Marie Stopes International real-time online vasectomy chat service, gives you the opportunity to get all of the answers to your questions on vasectomy from the comforts of your own office or home.

How does it work?

Simply go to www.vasectomyinfo.com.au and you will be directed to the online chat facility. Type in your question on vasectomy and a Marie Stopes International expert will get back to you with an answer in real-time.

When is it available?

The service is available between 8am and 8pm Mon - Fri & 9am to 2pm Sat (AEST).



**MARIE STOPES
INTERNATIONAL**

For more information on the services offered at a centre near you, or to make an appointment, please contact our National Support Centre on

Freecall 1800 003 707
(24 hours)

or visit our website at

www.mariestopes.com.au

Marie Stopes International aims to provide the best possible service to our clients and your feedback is very important to us. If you have any suggestions about improvements we could make to our information, or other aspects of our service, please use the Client Feedback Form that you are given at the centre, or speak to a Marie Stopes International team member. If you are not satisfied with any aspect of the service provided by Marie Stopes International and wish to make a formal complaint, the Centre Manager will give your complaint their urgent attention, carry out an investigation and respond to you. Should you be dissatisfied with the handling of your complaint, it will be referred to the CEO – Australia.

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