

What You Should Know About ...

See Glossary section for definitions of underlined words.

Sterilization for Women (Tubal Ligation)

What is sterilization?

- Sterilization is an operation to make you sterile (unable to have children).
- The operation is called tubal ligation (having fallopian tubes tied). It works 99.6% of the time
- It is a permanent method of birth control.

How does it work?

- In a tubal ligation, the tubes which carry eggs from the ovaries to the uterus are closed.
- This prevents the sperm from meeting the egg.

How is it done?

1. Tubal ligation is done in a hospital
2. You will get local freezing (like the freezing in the dentist's office) or general anesthesia (you will be "asleep").
3. The doctor makes a small cut in the abdomen so the fallopian tubes can be reached.
4. The doctor will close each tube with a clamp or cut and tie the tubes.
5. This is day surgery. You will be home the same day.

Are there any risks for sterilization?

There is very little risk to sterilization if an experienced doctor does the operation.

How long will it take me to get back to normal?

- Tubal ligation is an operation. You will have to rest for about two days.
- You will need to take it easy for about a week.
- You may need to avoid heavy lifting and difficult exercise for several weeks.

Does sterilization work right away?

- Yes.

When can I have sex again?

- You can have sex about one week after the operation and when you feel comfortable.
- Talk to your doctor.

Will anything be different after the sterilization?

- Your orgasm will feel the same as before the tubal ligation.
- You may enjoy sex more because you're not worried about pregnancy.
- Your cycle will not be changed and you will still get your period.

Does it protect me from STIs and HIV?

- No. Always use a latex condom or a female condom when you have sex to reduce the risk of getting an STI (sexually transmitted infection) or HIV infection.

Where can I get sterilization?

- Talk to your health care provider.

Do I have to pay for sterilization?

- Tubal ligation is completely covered by the provincial health care plan.

Can I have my tubes connected again (reverse sterilization) and have children in the future?

- Sterilization is a permanent method of birth control.
- Do not have a tubal ligation unless you are sure that you will not want children in the future.
- Reversing sterilization may not work. It is an expensive operation and not covered by the provincial health care plan.

Where can I get more information?

- From your health care provider, community health clinic, or public health nurse.
- From the Facts of Life On-Line: e-mail your questions to thefactsoflife@serc.mb.ca.

Glossary:

Birth Control – The different ways of preventing pregnancy.

Fallopian Tube – Two tubes, one leading from each ovary, to the uterus. This is where an ovum (egg cell) may be fertilized by a sperm cell.

Ovaries – The female organs that store and release egg cells and produce the hormones estrogen and progesterone.

Sperm – The male reproductive cell; carried out of the penis in the semen during ejaculation.

Uterus – A pear-shaped, hollow organ with muscular walls. The fetus grows in the uterus. The uterus is also called the “womb”.