

## What You Should Know About ...

# Sterilization for Men (Vasectomy)

### What is sterilization (vasectomy)?

- Sterilization is an operation to make you sterile (unable to have children).
- The operation is called vasectomy. It works 99.9% of the time.
- It is a permanent method of birth control.

### How does it work?

- In a vasectomy, the tubes (vas deferens) that carry sperm from the testicles to the penis are cut and tied.
- Sperm made in the testicles can't get into the fluid (semen) that comes out of your penis when you ejaculate ("cum").

### How is it done?

1. A vasectomy can be done in a doctor's office or in a hospital's out-patient department
2. You will get local freezing (like the freezing in the dentist's office).
3. The doctor makes a small cut(s) in your scrotum (bag of skin that holds the testicles) to reach the vas deferens.
4. The doctor then cuts the vas deferens and ties the ends.
5. Sometimes, the doctor does not need to make a cut. The skin is pierced (not cut) so that you won't need stitches. This is called "no scalpel" vasectomy.

### Are there any risks to 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?

- Vasectomy is a minor procedure.
- You will need to take it easy for a couple of days.
- You may need to avoid heavy lifting or difficult exercise for a week.

### Does sterilization work right away?

- No. There will be sperm in the vas deferens that was made before you had the vasectomy.
- You will still be able to get your partner pregnant until you give several samples with no sperm present. Your doctor will tell you when and how to give these samples. Your doctor will tell you when you are not producing sperm anymore.
- You need to use condoms or another method of birth control until there is no sperm in your ejaculate ("cum")

### When can I have sex again?

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

### **Will anything be different after the sterilization?**

- The same amount of fluid will come out of your penis as before the vasectomy. The only thing that's different is that there are no sperm in the fluid.
- Your orgasm will feel the same as before the vasectomy.
- You may enjoy sex more because you're not worried about pregnancy.

### **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?**

- Vasectomies done in a hospital are completely covered by the provincial health care plan.
- If your doctor does the vasectomy in the office, you'll have to pay a fee to cover the cost of the supplies he or she uses.

### **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 vasectomy 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](mailto:thefactsoflife@serc.mb.ca).