



Patrick M. Bennett, M.D.  
Gary D. Grossfeld, M.D.  
Harry Neuwirth, M.D.

1000 South Eliseo Drive  
Suite 201  
Greenbrae, CA 94904  
Tel (415) 461-4000  
Fax (415) 461-6907  
www.marinurology.com

### **VASECTOMY INFORMATION**

When considering a vasectomy for birth control, you should have a clear understanding of its purpose, effects, permanence, risks, failures and cost. This brochure will provide most of these details. You can find additional details at our web site: <http://www.marinurology.com>. Prior to any final decision, you and, if possible, your wife should arrange a consultation with me to discuss all of these matters.

The purpose of vasectomy is to block the passage of sperm into the seminal fluid, thus making the man sterile and unable to cause pregnancy. The sperm from each testes pass through a small tube (*vas deferens*) on each side to the prostate where they mix with fluid to form semen. Vasectomy interrupts both tubes and only stops the passage of sperm. The testes also produce the male hormone, which is secreted directly into the blood and is not affected by vasectomy. Therefore sexual desire and ability are not changed. After vasectomy, live sperm are still present beyond the site of interruption of the tubes, and you will need to eliminate these sperm in subsequent ejaculations to become sterile. Twelve or more ejaculations may be necessary to eliminate these sperm. You should not consider yourself to be sterile until the semen examination proves that there are no sperm in the seminal fluid.

Vasectomy is intended to be a permanent procedure. Because it is a permanent yet an elective step, you should consider future possibilities carefully. Divorce, death of a child, remarriage and changes in attitude do occur. It is estimated that 10% of all men undergoing vasectomy consider reversal at some time. Although operations to reverse vasectomy are available and techniques using microsurgery are much more successful than prior techniques, they are not always successful. It is unwise to undergo vasectomy if you are uncertain and are relying on a possible surgical reversal to hedge your decision. You should only proceed with vasectomy if you are virtually certain you do not want more children.

Vasectomy has risks in common with all operations and some potential special problems. As with any operation, infection and bleeding can occur. Bleeding, although unusual, is a special problem with vasectomy, because the scrotum bleeds easily and can swell to a large size. Your cooperation is important in avoiding that complication. Any physical activity increases the pressure in the blood vessels in the scrotum, and after vasectomy this can cause bleeding. You can greatly reduce this risk by limiting your activity, including walking and standing, as much as possible for two days after vasectomy. You should spend most of that time on a bed or couch. This is not a prudent time to test what you can get away with.

Another potential problem is the development of a tender nodule, a "granuloma," at the cut end of the vas resulting from leakage of sperm into the tissue. The tenderness usually subsides after several weeks, although very occasionally an operation to remove that nodule is necessary. Rarely, a granuloma can also cause a bridging of the divided ends of the vas, thus reconnecting the vas and restoring fertility. For this reason, no one can guarantee sterility after vasectomy. The incidence of recanalization has been estimated at one per thousand vasectomies. I use a vasectomy technique thought to have the best chance of preventing this problem. As a practical matter, vasectomy is a far more certain method of birth control than any method you are now using.

You will also want to know some of the practical details about having a vasectomy done in our office. You and your partner will be asked to sign the consent form and bring it with you at the time of the vasectomy. Many health insurance policies now cover vasectomy, but it is unwise to make that assumption. You should check directly with your insurance carrier, agent, or benefits manager. **For self paying patients (without insurance) we offer a reduced fee \$1000.00.** The fee covers the preoperative consultation, the vasectomy, all normal postoperative care for 30 days, and the post-vasectomy semen checks. If you elect not to have the vasectomy, then only a fee for the consultation is charged. **Reduced pricing is only offered if we are not billing a commercial insurance company.**

You should shower and wash the scrotum carefully within two hours of the scheduled vasectomy. You should have nothing to eat or drink for two hours prior to your vasectomy. You may elect to take a tranquilizing pill, Valium 10mg., that I offer to my patients. If so, you will take this under your tongue when you arrive in the office. You should have someone drive you to my office and back home, particularly if you have taken a tranquilizing medicine. Plan to be in my office approximately one hour.

After a local anesthetic (Xylocaine) is injected, the vasectomy is done through a small incision in the upper part of the scrotum on each side. You should experience only minimal discomfort. You should wear a supportive undergarment for at least two days following your procedure. You may take Tylenol or similar drugs for pain. You may find that the application of an ice bag (frozen peas work well) to the area is soothing. **Remember to stay at rest for two days.** After all swelling and tenderness are gone, you may resume all activity including sex. You may shower or bathe the area of vasectomy after two days.

You must continue to use some other contraceptive method after vasectomy until the absence of sperm is documented. We will give you two containers at the time of the vasectomy. Please provide a semen specimen for examination at six weeks after your vasectomy. The specimen may be collected by masturbation at home and brought to our office the same day it is collected on any regular working day between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:30p.m. Please call the office before 5:00p.m. that day to learn the results of that semen examination. Occasionally, additional ejaculations are necessary before all sperm are eliminated and additional semen examinations may then be required.

**If you are having any problems after vasectomy, or if you have any questions, do not hesitate to call our office.**

To conclude this cautionary brochure with a realistic perspective, it is appropriate to acknowledge that the vast majority of the millions of men who have undergone vasectomy have found it to be a trouble-free answer to a vexing problem.