

# **VasectomyCenter – Seattle \* Eastside \* Edmonds**

*Specializing in No-Needle No-Scalpel Vasectomy*

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## **No Scalpel, No Needle Vasectomies Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is a no-scalpel vasectomy?**

No-scalpel vasectomy is a procedure first introduced in the United States in 1985. The end results are the same as with a traditional vasectomy, but the procedural technique is, in our opinion, far superior.

### **What does “no-needle” mean?**

“No-needle” refers to the way anesthesia is given. The doctor uses a special auto-injector using air pressure rather than needle injections to numb the skin and vas. This is far more comfortable for the patient.

### **How does the no-scalpel vasectomy differ from a traditional one?**

A traditional vasectomy involves the use of a scalpel to make two incisions in the skin of the scrotum (as opposed to a single small puncture with the no-scalpel approach). The No-Scalpel technique requires less anesthesia (no needle sticks) and the risks of infection and bleeding are much lower.

### **Is a vasectomy painful?**

Most men feel little, if any, pain with a no-scalpel vasectomy. There is mild discomfort with the application of anesthesia. You may experience a slight tugging or pulling sensation during the procedure. The effects of the anesthesia will last for several hours and this will allow you time to go home, lie down and apply an ice pack. Tylenol or ibuprofen will be all that you require later for inflammation and pain relief. There will be a small amount of swelling that may last for three to seven days.

### **You say "no needle" but might you use a needle during the procedure?**

Yes, in some cases the no needle technique does not penetrate as deeply as we'd like and we find it necessary to add an additional amount of anesthesia using a syringe and tiny needle. This is referred to as after-loading. Since the skin has already been numbed with the spray, it is unusual for patients to feel any discomfort

### **What can I expect at your clinic?**

The no-scalpel, no-needle vasectomy will be performed by a board-certified urologist with advanced training in the no-scalpel vasectomy technique. You will be scheduled for an initial consult. The vasectomy can be performed any time thereafter.

### **Why is the consult and vasectomy procedure done on two separate days?**

We strongly feel that it is important to have a period of time to review the materials discussed during your consult. This should be considered a permanent procedure and it is important for our patients have a chance to reflect upon their decision before proceeding.

### **Do I need to discontinue any medications prior to my vasectomy?**

Any aspirin containing products should be stopped seven to ten days before your vasectomy as these can significantly "thin" the blood. Other meds including Coumadin (warfarin) and Plavix should be discontinued as well.

### **Will I need to miss work?**

We recommend that you remain sedentary for two days following your vasectomy. You should avoid heavy lifting and strenuous exercise for one week. Most men who have the procedure on a Friday or Saturday will be back to work on Monday.

### **When can I resume sex?**

Most patients can resume intercourse within the first week following their vasectomy. You must continue to use some form of effective birth control until two consecutive post-surgical semen tests show that no sperm is present.

### **Am I immediately sterile?**

**NO!** Sperm will remain "downstream" within the vas deferens for several months. It will take about a dozen ejaculations or more to evacuate the vas deferens of sperm and, obviously, it is important that you and your partner continue another form of birth control until the system has cleared.

### **How will I know when I am sterile?**

You will be given two specimen containers before you leave the clinic. Approximately six weeks (and after about 12 ejaculations) following your vasectomy, you will be asked to bring in your first sample. We highly recommend you continue using some other form of birth control until we see two consecutive samples free of sperm.

### **What are the possible complications?**

As with any surgery, regardless of how minor, there are risks of bleeding, pain and infection. These are exceedingly rare with the no-scalpel approach and occur in less than one per cent of patients. Occasionally, tender swelling at the end of the vas may occur. This is called a sperm granuloma. In most cases no treatment is required.

### **Are there long-term health risks associated with a vasectomy?**

No. Vasectomies were first performed in the U.S. during the late 1930s. Many studies have since looked at the lasting health effects and found no long-term health risks associated with vasectomy. In 1993 a panel assembled by the National Institutes of Health reaffirmed the conclusion of most medical experts that vasectomy is safe.

### **What are the chances of my vasectomy failing?**

This is called recanalization and occurs in less than 1 per 2,000 patients. This rare complication means that you are NOT sterile and can be diagnosed by the presence of sperm in the post-vasectomy specimens.

### **Will a vasectomy affect my sex life?**

Your vasectomy will have no effect on your erections, sex drive (libido), hormone levels or performance in any way. Some people feel intercourse is more spontaneous when there is no fear of unwanted pregnancy.

### **Is my vasectomy reversible?**

In most cases the vasectomy can be surgically reversed. The success rate depends on the number of years that have passed from the time of your vasectomy to the time of the reversal. The procedure is quite expensive and requires several hours of micro-surgery. A vasectomy should be considered permanent sterilization.

### **What are the advantages of vasectomy over tubal ligation?**

A vasectomy is faster, cheaper and, most importantly, safer than a tubal ligation. Unlike a vasectomy, a tubal ligation requires general or regional anesthesia, a day-surgery setting, and is performed within the abdominal cavity. Because it is a more complicated procedure, a tubal ligation carries greater health risks and has a longer recovery period than a vasectomy.

### **Is it possible to store my sperm before my vasectomy?**

Yes. For more information regarding cryo-preservation of sperm call the Pacific Northwest Fertility Clinic at (206) 515-0000. They are located on the Swedish Medical Center First Hill Campus.

### **Will my insurance pay for my vasectomy?**

This, of course, depends on your individual health care plan. In most cases a basic health care plan does cover elective sterilization. Please contact your insurance carrier for details or call our business office at (425) 394-0773. If you are not covered by an insurance plan, payment must be made with a credit card or check prior to the vasectomy. A generous "prompt pay" discount will be made for procedures that are pre-paid. Again, call our office for the details.