

About Your Surgery

Vasectomy reversal

This handout explains how to prepare and what to expect after having surgery to reverse a vasectomy. This surgery is done to help couples reach their long-term family planning goals.

How to Prepare

- For **10 days before** your surgery, do **not** take any aspirin or aspirin-like drugs such as ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil) or naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn). These drugs may cause excess bleeding during and after your surgery.
- You may eat normally the evening before your surgery. Do **not** eat or drink anything after midnight.

Morning of Your Surgery

- Follow the directions you received from your anesthesiologist for the morning of surgery. If you did not receive specific directions, do **not** eat or drink anything on the morning of your surgery.
- If you have medicines that you must take in the morning before your surgery, take them with only a small sip of water.
- Wear loose, comfortable clothing.



A vasectomy reversal is done to help couples reach their long-term family planning goals.

Day of Surgery

Precautions

For 24 hours after your surgery, do **not**:

- Drive.
- Use machinery.
- Eat any heavy or large meals. A heavy meal may be hard to digest.
- Drink alcohol.
- Make important decisions. The anesthesia you received can make it hard to think clearly. It can take up to 24 hours to wear off.

Self-care

For the first 24 hours after your surgery.

- Rest. This will help reduce swelling.
- Apply cold packs (such as a bag of frozen peas) to your groin area to help reduce swelling:
 - Cover the area with a towel first. Do **not** place the cold pack directly on your skin.
 - Leave the cold pack on for 20 minutes, then off for 20 minutes. Keep doing this for the first 24 hours after your procedure. Keep the area cool, **NOT** cold.

After Surgery

Common Symptoms

You may have discomfort after your surgery. These common symptoms do not require a doctor's attention:

- Bruising of your scrotum and the base of your penis. This may take about 1 to 2 weeks to go away.
- Some swelling of your scrotum.
- A small amount of thin, clear, pinkish fluid draining from your incision. This may last for a few days after your surgery. Keep the area clean and dry.
- If you had general anesthesia, you may have sore throat, nausea, constipation, or body aches. These symptoms should go away within 48 hours.

Fluids and Food

- Make sure you drink plenty of water so you stay hydrated.
- After surgery, start with clear liquids or light foods. Slowly add your usual foods to your diet, as you are able to handle them. Avoid spicy or greasy foods.

Pain Medicine

- For moderate pain, take the pain medicine your doctor prescribed. Many doctors prescribe Vicodin, which contains acetaminophen and a prescription pain reliever. If you are taking Vicodin, always take it with food in your stomach so that you do not get nauseated.
- Do **not** drive while you are taking prescription pain medicine.

- You can take acetaminophen (Tylenol), ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), or naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn) for mild discomfort 2 to 3 days after your surgery.
- **Do not take acetaminophen while you are taking Vicodin.** If you are given pain medicine other than Vicodin, ask your doctor or nurse if it is safe to take acetaminophen while you are taking your prescription pain medicine.

Day After Surgery

- Call the Men's Health Center at 206.598.6358 to make a follow-up appointment in 1 to 2 weeks if you have not already done so.
- Wear your athletic support.
- Pain and swelling may be worse today than yesterday.
- Expect a small amount of bloody discharge from the incision.
- The skin around your incision site, scrotum, and on the base of your penis may look bruised. This is normal.

After the Second Day

- Remove **all** dressings (bandages) from inside your athletic support 48 hours after your surgery.
- After you remove the dressings, you can shower. If the gauze dressing sticks to your scrotum, get the dressing wet in the shower and it will come off more easily.
- Continue wearing the athletic support for 1 week.
- Your incision will be closed with sutures. These do not need to be removed. They will dissolve in 2 to 3 weeks.
- You may resume normal, **light** activity 48 hours after surgery or when you feel better. Let your body be your guide. If an activity causes discomfort, slow down or stop and rest. Wait a while before you try that activity again.
- You may resume more vigorous activities such as jogging or weight lifting 2 to 3 weeks after your surgery. The exact timing will depend on the type of procedure you had.
- Do not have any sexual activity, including masturbation, for 2 to 3 weeks after surgery. This timing will also depend on the type of procedure you had.
- You may return to work in 3 to 4 days, or when you feel comfortable enough to do so.

Follow-up Visit for Semen Analysis

- You will need to come to our clinic for semen collection and analysis 6 weeks after your vasectomy reversal.
- You must not ejaculate for 2 to 5 days before this appointment.
- To schedule this visit, call the Men's Health Center at 206.598.6358. When you hear the recording, press 8.
- Depending on the results of this first semen analysis, more testing may be needed.

When to Call the Clinic

Complications after this procedure are rare. Call the Men's Health Center at 206.598.6358 during business hours, or go to the Emergency Room after hours if you have:

- Fever higher than 101°F (38.3°C) and shaking and/or chills, especially if your incision area is also warm, swollen, red, and painful, with pus draining from the site. This could mean that you have an infection. You may need to take antibiotics.
- Severe bruising (black and blue skin), especially if you also have throbbing pain or the area around your scrotum is bulging. This could mean that you have a *hematoma* (bleeding under the skin). A hematoma may need to be drained.
- Any other symptoms that you are concerned about.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Men's Health Center:
206.598.6358

Weekdays from 8 a.m. to
5 p.m.

After hours and on weekends
or holidays, call this same
number or go to the
Emergency Room.

Find more information at:
<http://depts.washington.edu/uroweb>