

Vasectomy Reversal (VR)



Need to know

Please read this before your Vasectomy Reversal

Preparing for the VR

- Do not eat or drink after midnight if your operation is in the morning and not after 7.00am if it is in the afternoon.
- Please shave the hair at the front and sides of the scrotum from the base of the penis down. You do not need to shave the pubic hair
- Take supportive underpants (not your best) or a jockstrap into the hospital with you and to theatre to wear after the operation.
- Arrange a week off work.
- Avoid intercourse for two weeks after the operation and heavy lifting for four weeks.

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What to expect during the VR

- An incision is placed on each side of the scrotum that are a little larger than those used for the vasectomy.
- The vas is a very small muscular tube with a 2mm outer diameter and an inner diameter through which sperm flow (the lumen), of less than 1/2mm. Since the structure is so small, the stitches must be placed very exactly so that there is minimal scarring. Too much scarring can cause the lumen of the vas to close and the procedure to fail. Best results are achieved by the use of an operating microscope with placement of tiny sutures that can barely be seen with the naked eye.

Complications

Complications following a vasectomy reversal are rare.

- The commonest complication is bleeding from the edges of the scrotal incision but this is usually just an ooze and stops over the following 12 hours.
- Occasionally, a large bruise develops in the scrotum – this is usually apparent before you go home, and settles with time and rest.

- An infection of the scrotum rarely occurs but if it does, will present a few days after the surgery and is apparent because the pain becomes worse rather than better and the scrotum becomes red.

If you experience any of the above complications or have any other problem occur after your VR, please call the Clinic or your Surgeon if outside clinic hours.

After the VR

- You will be asked to re-attend five days after surgery for a check of the sutures and then six weeks later. It is best if you can bring in a semen analysis to our laboratory a few days before the six-week check to see if there are sperm present in the ejaculate. >>

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VR, continued...

- Usually, there are some sperm present in low numbers and with low motility, but do not despair if there are none since it can take up to six months for sperm to return. The count and motility usually improves with time and it can take between three to eight months for sperm quantity to become normal.

- If sperm have not appeared within six months, then the reversal has failed. In up to six percent of men who have return of sperm to the ejaculate, gradual scarring, called fibrosis, can occur at the reversal site with later loss of all sperm in the ejaculate. This usually occurs quickly after a reversal but has been reported up to two years later. If you are concerned about this possibility, then think about storing sperm once you get a good sperm count after the reversal.

Achieving pregnancy

Time to pregnancy: The average time to a pregnancy is 12 months and almost all pregnancies that are going to occur will occur within three years. If a pregnancy has not occurred within six months, especially if the woman is older than 35, then further investigations are recommended. This will involve sperm antibody testing and female fertility evaluation.

Sperm quality: Although up to 80 percent of men will have sperm in their ejaculate following the reversal, not everyone will achieve a pregnancy. The back-pressure following vasectomy may cause some damage to the tubules that make sperm in the testis. However, even if the semen analysis is normal, a pregnancy does not always occur and so it is sensible to look for sperm antibodies.

Sperm antibodies: About 75 percent of men develop antibodies against sperm following a vasectomy and these can interfere with sperm transport in the female genital tract and also interfere with the process of fertilisation. Often people wonder about whether a blood antibody test done before a vasectomy reversal will help give some idea as to the chances of success from the procedure. Unfortunately, it does not predict the chance of success. It is antibodies on the sperm that correlate with chances of a pregnancy and so, this test is certainly worth doing if a pregnancy does not occur within six months of the operation.

