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UNDERSTANDING A VASECTOMY

The following information is supplied to help you understand what a vasectomy is and how it is used for birth control. A vasectomy is a procedure performed in a man for the purpose of preventing future pregnancies. This procedure involves cutting and tying the two tubes (vas deferens) which carry the sperm from the testicles during ejaculation. After an initial consultation and counseling session the procedure is scheduled. It can usually be performed in the office under local anesthesia using the "no scalpel" technique through one or two small puncture wounds in the scrotum (sack). Usually no external stitches are necessary. Afterwards, you can usually return to work in a day or two.

When the vasectomy is scheduled, it is important **NOT to take any medicine containing aspirin or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin, etc.) for one week before and one week after the procedure.** You will be given medication, including antibiotics and pain medicine, to take at home. However, most people find that any pain they may feel is relieved by plain Tylenol. You will be seen in the office for follow-up in about a week.

A vasectomy should be considered an IRREVERSIBLE form of birth control since methods used to reverse it are expensive and are not always successful. There are several reversible methods which should be considered if there is a question about the desire to have more children in the future. If there is no question, then a vasectomy is a good choice for permanent birth control. It is easier than a tubal ligation in the female. It has a very high rate of success (greater than 99%). The complication rate is very low.

Before you can rely on the vasectomy for birth control, you must produce two consecutive semen samples that show ZERO SPERM. This is usually best obtained after about 12 ejaculates. It is also recommended that you obtain a yearly semen analysis as long as you rely on the vasectomy for birth control. This will guard against late re-canalization (rejoining of the cut ends) of the vas. In spite of these precautions, there is a very small chance (less than 1 %) that you could still father a child. The vasectomy is performed only for birth control and offers no protection against contracting sexually transmitted diseases, such as, Gonorrhea, Syphilis or AIDS. There has been some controversy in the past linking vasectomy to heart disease or prostate cancer. However, several large scale studies have not shown this to be true, our office can provide you with information and/or references on this topic, if you wish.

To summarize, the vasectomy is a safe, reliable and easy method to obtain permanent sterilization. If you have any questions or if you are interested in undergoing a vasectomy, please contact our office at the above number.

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