Important Facts

What is a vasectomy?
A vasectomy is a simple surgical procedure, generally carried out under local anesthesia, to produce male sterilization.

What does the procedure involve?
A vasectomy involves cutting and closing off the tubes that carry sperm. The procedure generally takes 20-30 minutes. A local anesthetic is injected in the skin of the scrotum. This generally feels like a pin stick for 2-5 seconds. Once the area becomes numb, there is no sensation of pain; you may, however, feel touch or pressure, which may extend into the groin or lower abdomen.

Is there pain after the vasectomy?
Pain and swelling can be quite variable from patient to patient. There may be mild discomfort in the scrotum and groin for 3-5 days. At times, there may be discoloration of the scrotum — this is due to a small amount of blood seeping under the skin, and it will resolve on its own. After the procedure, you will be able to walk out of the office and resume normal activity. Normal activity does not include roller blading, bike riding, jogging, waterskiing, tennis or racquetball. Discuss impact aerobics with your doctor, at the time of your surgery. It is advisable to wear a snug athletic supporter or briefs for a few days after the vasectomy. It is also important to refrain from intercourse for 2 days.

Is a vasectomy permanent?
It should be considered a permanent procedure, however rare failures do occur. If requested, there are operations to re-connect the tubes. This is not a simple procedure. It requires 2 hours of operating time, and a general anesthetic. It is significantly more costly, and most insurance companies will not cover the cost.

Will I be immediately sterile?
No, it requires a minimum of 8 weeks. At 8 weeks, a semen specimen should be taken to a lab and the lab will determine if sperm are absent. If no sperm are seen, then birth-control methods may be stopped and the man is considered sterile. Sexual function will not change. Complete absence of sperm can take several months in a few cases.

Are there risks?
As with any surgical procedure, there are risks. Generally, these would include bleeding, infection and persistent pain. Very rare complications would include injury to the blood supply to the testicles and failure of the procedure. There is no risk of affecting your sexual function or hormone levels.

Patient Instructions

Before Surgery
1. No aspirin, ibuprofen or blood thinners for 1 week before the procedure.
2. On the night before the procedure, shave the entire scrotal area. It is not necessary to shave the thighs. After shaving, wash the area thoroughly with any anti-bacterial soap, like Dial® or Safeguard®.
3. Prior to leaving for your appointment, wash the area again, with the same anti-bacterial soap for about 5 minutes.
4. Your procedure will take about 20 to 30 minutes.
5. Bring a clean athletic supporter.

After Surgery
1. The stitches in the skin will dissolve and will not need to be removed.
   Apply Neosporin® ointment after each void, until stitches are gone.
2. Take 200mg ibuprofen tablets — 2 tablets, 4 times a day for 5 days or as directed by your surgeon.
3. The skin around the incisions may become black and blue. This will resolve on its own.
4. You may experience some minor discomfort following the procedure. There is a possibility of swelling, and it is advisable for you to be prepared to rest at home immediately following the operation. Wear a scrotal support and apply ice, on and off, for approximately 24 hours; longer, if it makes you more comfortable. If swelling of more than 50% or greater-than-normal scrotal size occurs, call the office.
5. You may shower the next day. For minor discomfort after the first 24-hour period, soaking in a hot tub of water for 10-15 minutes each night will help.
6. Using common sense, you may do what you would normally do; however, do not engage in any strenuous activity for 24-48 hours. Intercourse should also be avoided during this period or until any swelling and soreness has stopped.
7. Remember, you will NOT be sterile immediately after the vasectomy. You can stop using contraceptive measure during intercourse when your sperm count is zero. After 8 weeks from the time of the vasectomy, a specimen of semen should be taken to a lab where a microscopic exam will determine if sperm are absent.