

What is permanent birth control?

Permanent Birth Control (sometimes called sterilization) is done by vasectomy (for people with a penis/testicles) or tubal ligation/sterilization (for people with a uterus).

- **Tubal Ligation/Sterilization:** The fallopian tubes leading from the ovaries to the uterus are cut, clamped, cauterized, or tied and this prevents an egg from travelling down the fallopian tubes to where it could meet sperm. This is a surgical procedure usually performed in a hospital using a general anesthetic.
- **Vasectomy:** The vas deferens leading from the scrotum that join with the urethra are cut, clamped, cauterized, or tied. This prevents sperm from being released during ejaculation. It is a procedure that can be done in a doctor’s office using freezing.

How effective is permanent birth control?

Permanent birth control is a very effective method of contraception:

- Tubal ligation is 99.5% effective immediately after the operation, which means that less than 1 person out of 100 using it as their only form of birth control will get pregnant in a year.
- Vasectomy is 99.85% effective, but not right away. You will need to go for a follow up visit in 3 months before it can be considered safe to rely on as birth control. A backup method of birth control (such as condoms) will need to be used until ejaculate is free of sperm.

Advantages of permanent birth control	Disadvantages of permanent birth control
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly effective • No supplies or future clinic visits are needed once it is effective • Nothing to interrupt intercourse • Permanent • 40% reduction in risk of ovarian cancer with tubal ligation • Covered by MSP/your Care Card • in the case of vasectomy, a quick recovery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered to be not reversible (sometimes they may be reversed but it is not always successful and usually the procedures to reverse sterilization are not covered under MSP/your care card) • No protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) • Tubal ligation/sterilization requires a surgical procedure which carries more risk than a vasectomy which is an in office medical procedure • Higher risk of ectopic pregnancy if a failure occurs with tubal ligation • May require multiple appointments • Recovery time needed after the procedure

How can I get permanent birth control?

Both procedures are covered by MSP. For either procedure, you will need to get a referral to a specialist: a urologist for a vasectomy or a gynecologist for tubal sterilization. You can get this referral from your family doctor, a walk-in clinic or an Options for Sexual Health clinic. There are also specialized private clinics that do vasectomies but sometimes at a cost. If you would like information on where to get a referral or find a clinic, please contact Sex Sense at 1-800-739-7367, 604-731-7803 or sexsense.org.

Which kind of sterilization is a better option?

Although both procedures are safe, if you are in a long-term relationship, vasectomy is usually recommended over tubal sterilization when possible. It is safer, more effective, easier to get, carries fewer risks and is easier to recover from than tubal sterilization.

What if sex happens before my permanent birth control is considered effective?

Until vasectomy has been confirmed as complete (at the 3 month follow up visit) or your tubal sterilization procedure has been completed, you may also want to consider using an effective method of birth control to protect yourself against unintended pregnancy. If sex happens before this time, consider using Emergency Contraception to lower the chances of pregnancy. For more information please see our website at www.optionsforsexualhealth.org.

Questions? We're here for you!

We know it can be confusing to choose and use a method. We are here to help. You can visit one of our Options for Sexual Health Clinics to speak with a health care provider. Our Sex Sense Team is available Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. by phone 1-800-739-7367 or by email at SexSense.org to answer your questions about birth control, or any other questions about sex, sexuality, or sexual health. This fact sheet contains general information and should not be used in place of individual consultation with a qualified healthcare provider.