

Sterilisation

Sterilisation is a permanent method of contraception. It involves an operation. Either a man or a woman can be sterilised.

What is sterilisation?

Sterilisation is a type of contraception where you have an operation to prevent you having any more children. It is considered a permanent method of contraception, as reversal is a complicated operation which is not always successful. Reversal is not usually available on the NHS.

What types of sterilisation are there?

Either a man or a woman can be sterilised. Obviously, because male and female anatomy is not the same, the operation is entirely different.

- Male sterilisation (vasectomy) stops sperm travelling from the testicles (testes). It is done by dividing the tubes in the scrotum. Read about [vasectomy \(male sterilisation.\)](#)
- Female sterilisation prevents the egg from travelling along the Fallopian tubes to meet a sperm. Read about [female sterilisation.](#)

Is male or female sterilisation better?

It is an individual decision. Generally male sterilisation is safer as it is less likely to need a general anaesthetic. It is also quicker and more effective. You can read more about the pros and cons of each in the individual leaflets linked above.

Why choose sterilisation?

Sterilisation is an effective form of contraception. It is only for people who have decided they do not want children, or further children, in the future. On the plus side, after sterilisation you don't need to think about contraception ever again. On the down side it involves an operation, and you never know what is around the corner in life. You may think you never want any/more children, but you don't know what could change in the future.

Further reading

- [Dohle GR, Diemer T, Kopa Z, et al](#); European Association of Urology guidelines on vasectomy. *Eur Urol.* 2012 Jan;61(1):159–63. doi: 10.1016/j.eururo.2011.10.001. Epub 2011 Oct 19.
- [Trussell J](#); Contraceptive failure in the United States, *Contraception*, 2011
- [Male and female sterilisation](#); Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Healthcare (September 2014)
- [Siddiqui MM, Wilson KM, Epstein MM, et al](#); Vasectomy and risk of aggressive prostate cancer: a 24-year follow-up study. *J Clin Oncol.* 2014 Sep 20;32(27):3033–8.

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Authored by:	Peer Reviewed by: Dr Jacqueline Payne, FRCGP	
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