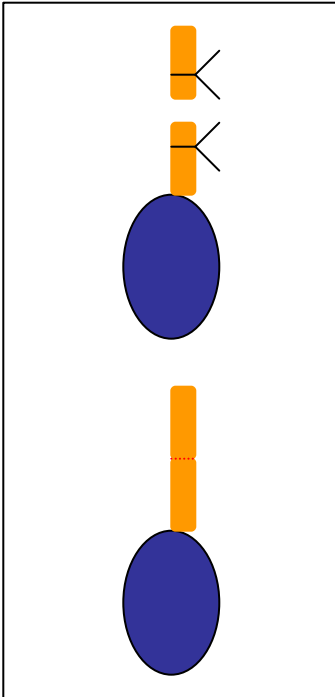


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VASOVASOSTOMY



Vasovasostomy, or vas reversal, refers to the repair of a previous vasectomy or iatrogenic injury to the vas deferens. The vas deferens is the tube that transports sperm from the testis to the urethra. Some men have elected to have the tube tied and cut as a form of sterilization. Other men may have had previous hernia operations or other groin surgery that resulted in complete blockage of both tubes. In both cases, the tube can be repaired to restore patency.

In experienced hands, vasovasostomy results in greater than 90 percent patency and greater than 75 percent pregnancy rates. The success of surgery depends on many factors including when the original surgery occurred, the technique used, and the degree of scarring. In most cases, a thorough history combined with the physical examination can help predict the likelihood of success.

Vasovasostomy surgery takes between 3 and 5 hours. It is performed under regional or general anesthesia with an operating microscope. The patient can return to desk work as early as 2 days after surgery, however, strenuous physical activity (jogging, weight lifting, sex) is prohibited for one month.

The follow up care consists of an office visit one month after surgery to check the incisions and to analyze a semen specimen. The specimen must be produced at home and brought in to the office within one hour of production. If no sperm are seen, the next specimen is obtained in two months. In some cases, it may take up to a year for sperm to return to the ejaculate. In most cases, however, sperm are seen in the initial specimen.

If at the initial evaluation a patient is determined to be a less than optimal candidate for vasectomy reversal, plans can be made to freeze sperm at the time of vasovasostomy. The sperm is retrieved at the time of the operation and preserved in a special medium. The sample is then cryopreserved by the IVF specialists and is available for future use, if necessary. The fees for cryopreserving and storing sperm are available at the IVF office.