

Sterilization

How:

Sterilization is permanent birth control. Parts of the reproductive system are blocked forever so that the sperm and egg cannot meet.

When:

Sterilization can be done any time for men and any time when a woman is not pregnant. Before a person takes this step, they need to be sure they do not want a child or any more children.

Where:

In a man, the surgery is called a vasectomy. It can be done in a clinic. The two sperm tubes are blocked so sperm cannot pass through the penis.

In a woman, the surgery is called a tubal ligation or occlusion. The two fallopian tubes are blocked so an egg cannot pass through them to be fertilized. A woman can be sterilized right after a birth before she leaves the hospital. A tubal occlusion, called Essure® can be done without surgery and during a clinic visit.

Advantages:

Sterilization needs to be done only once. It works very well. Male sterilization is cheaper and safer than female sterilization.

Disadvantages:

There are some risks in having minor surgery. Talk with your healthcare provider about risks. The surgery can cost too much for some people who do not have insurance or money to pay for it, but it saves money over time. Check with your local family planning agency to see if you qualify for a free or low-cost vasectomy. With a vasectomy, use another birth control method until you have zero sperm. With Essure®, use another birth control method for three months. Sterilization doesn't protect against HIV/STDs.

Side effects:

After the surgery, there should be no bad side effects. Sex drive is not changed. The man still has an erection and ejaculates (cums), but the fluid has no sperm. The woman still has monthly periods.

Risks:

There is some risk of bleeding, infection or failure with sterilization. Some people regret their decision.

Effectiveness:

Five out of 1,000 women will get pregnant each year with female sterilization.

0.15% of first-year U. S. vasectomies will fail.