



seattlediy.org



Vasectomy
Party

Was the Difference?

I'd been thinking about getting a vasectomy since 13. It came about during my whole "process of radicalization" - I had given up eating red meat, I gave up listening to rap music (except "The Chronic" and "Doggy Style") and started going to punk shows, I gave up trying to impress my dad by following his religion, I gave up sports in favor of smoking pot, etc. I was doing a lot of the same thing that other 13 year olds were doing in 1994, but you know, trying a little harder at it than was probably necessary.

I can trace my first serious consideration to meeting a nice elderly black man hanging out at a community center in my old hick town. After hanging out with him a bit I for some reason asked him about his kids. "I don't have any," he said.

It kind of weirded me out and, being the annoying little kid that I was, I bugged him about it. It turns out that he didn't regret not having kids in the slightest. He had plenty of friends, had a loving wife, and had helped raise other people's kids and that was plenty enough for him.

I thought about it a lot. Just like everyone else I grew up with I had the same assumption that I'd grow up and get married to a nice woman, get a well paying job, and have some kids. I was in that phase of enjoying being contrary to everyone else, and of course started challenging these ideas in my head. Somehow I ended up internalizing this and it stuck with me for going on 13 more years.

Arguments

I've had conversations about never wanting to have my own biological children a lot over the years, and unfortunately as I've grown older people have become more combative with me. When you're 16 and talk about it with your friends or family, nobody thinks that you're really serious; they think you're just being cute and idealistic. When I brought it up again when I was 21, it caused some serious fights. Multiple people in my family told me that it was my "duty" as a person with "good genetics" to procreate. But would my family's history of hereditary kidney disease, diabetes, some other health problems, plus me being short and balding all be considered "good genetics"? (Plus, uh... are you advocating for the creation of a Master Race or something?) Then there's the whole, "oh to know the joy of seeing someone that YOU'VE created - seeing your features in their face!" argument, well I guess I'm not that susceptible to ego-trips. My mother (who is white) tried to suggest that since I'm Native American I should have children because there's so few of us left and by not having children I'm further endangering my people's future. Well, I hate to say it but it's not the lack of native babies that's endangering us - it's shitty HUD food, poor health care, poor environmental controls around rez's, a long history of broken treaties, assimilation, etc... you know, hundreds of years of oppression and racism. Really I don't know why she should care that much - she has 5 biological grandchildren already. A good one that I've heard a lot is, "People who willingly get vasectomies are the same people that SHOULD be having babies and would do a thoughtful job raising children, as opposed to those people who have unwanted children." Well, you can still help raise other people's babies (foster care, adoption, or helping a friend raise a child), and you'd probably have a more positive impact doing it that way.

page 1

Do you lose male hormones?

Hormones aren't produced by sperm traveling through your penis. Nope, you produce hormones just like normal.

Does it make your voice higher?

No, you're thinking of CASTRATION. That's different. But it's funny to pretend they're the same.

Does it change the color/opacity of your semen?

Nope, not that I can tell.

Does it change the amount that comes out?

Very very VERY slightly.

Does it change the smell/taste/etc?

Yeah, now it's fruity. I swear.

Does it affect "getting it up?"

Only if you can only get it up by thinking you're going to get someone pregnant.

Now that you're no longer able to perform your main biological function, is your will to live destroyed?

I don't know about you, but I had no will to live even before the vasectomy. No change.

Did you read that story about getting a vasectomy in the "Best Of Craigslist"?

(<http://www.craigslist.org/about/best/sea/274495936.html>)

Yeah, that was funny.

If you have any questions about this stuff, even stupid questions, contact me.

Benji Rouse
benji@seattlediy.org
110 Harvard Ave E
Seattle, WA, 98102

art by Aaron!
WRISHI!



Page 6

The Discomfort & The Risk

One of the only real drawbacks with getting the vasectomy is that you'll be out of commission for about a week or so from doing any real physical activity, mostly to ensure that you don't accidentally damage anything while you're healing.

The beauty of how this procedure has advanced is that now there are NO needles, scalpels, or really anything scary.

As far as potential complications, there's a very very small chance that you can end up with a benign lump in your scrotum, and there's also the small risk of temporary swelling. A good friend of mine got a vasectomy in the 90's, and he ended up with his testicles swollen the size of a grapefruit, and now has a permanent lump. That happening now is pretty damn rare.

One pretty scary thing is the chance of a automatic accidental reversal. They're incredibly rare, but on occasion you can have a successful vasectomy and then find yourself having a miraculously and mysteriously reconnected vas deferens. Scary!

How It Works

A vasectomy is basically the cutting of your vas deferens, which is the tube that brings sperm from your testicles to your penis (and from there, to the world!). Once it gets snipped, there's no longer any way for sperm to travel down your penis, and instead the sperm gets absorbed back into your body.

Here's a rundown of the procedure:

You pull your pants down, your penis gets taped to your stomach, the doctor uses a "hydrospray" as an anesthetic on your scrotum (if feels like a small flick of a finger), the doc uses a laser to make an incision that's a few millimeters wide, the doc pulls the vas deferens forward and snips it, then ties the ends in a knot, stuffs them back in your scrotum, puts a cotton swab on the site of the incision, then you're good to go.



My Story

I made my decision to finally get the vasectomy because I was in a major funk. It was maybe just seasonal affective disorder or something - you know, endless shitty winter days in Seattle. Anyway, in order to get out of this funk I decided to try to work on some of my bigger life goals - the vasectomy being one of them. So I went to planned parenthood, sat around the

lobby awkwardly by myself waiting to get seen.

When I was finally brought into a room, I explained my story, telling the woman how it's something that I've wanted for years and something that I really wouldn't regret at any foreseeable point. She was tickled pink and decided immediately that I was soundly making a mature decision for myself and was clearly not high or anything. I filled out paperwork for Take Charge so I could get the vasectomy for free. She gave me the number for a place called "The Vasectomy Clinic" that performs nothing but, and told me to call them once my Take Charge has gone through.

A couple weeks later, I got the papers in the mail for Take Charge, and I called The Vasectomy Clinic and made an appointment for the next week. On the day of the appointment I dressed in my finest sweatpants, and my best friends Allison and Lacey accompanied me to the clinic. I waited for the doc to be ready to see me.

Next was by far the most difficult part of the whole thing - convincing a grizzled old vasectomy doctor that I deserved to get one. Here's the deal: I was 23, wasn't having sex with my then-current girlfriend, had never been in a long-term relationship, wasn't opposed to using condoms, and wasn't in any *real* particular rush to get a vasectomy. And I told him this. Uh, bad decision.

"Why don't you wait until you're in a solid relationship, talk about it with your partner, THEN get it?" he asked.

I responded, "well, this is something that I've wanted for the past 10 years, and now is a convenient time to get it. I want to get it out of the way so that it's not even something that I'll have to deal with later on."

"Well, what if you end up dating a woman who you're completely in love with, but won't want to stay with you because you're not able to have children?"

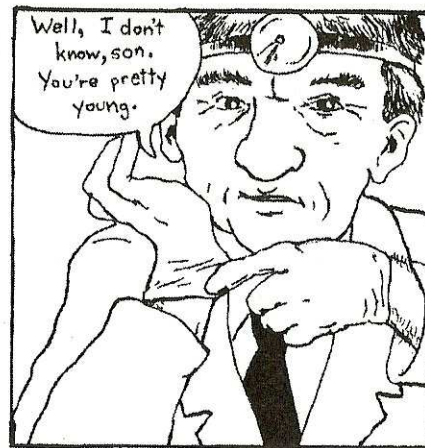
"That wouldn't be a very good fit for a life partner for me, would it?"

Eventually I told him, "look, I'm sorry but I'm pretty dead-set on this decision. It's now or later, and I'd prefer now."

He shrugged his shoulders and did the operation.

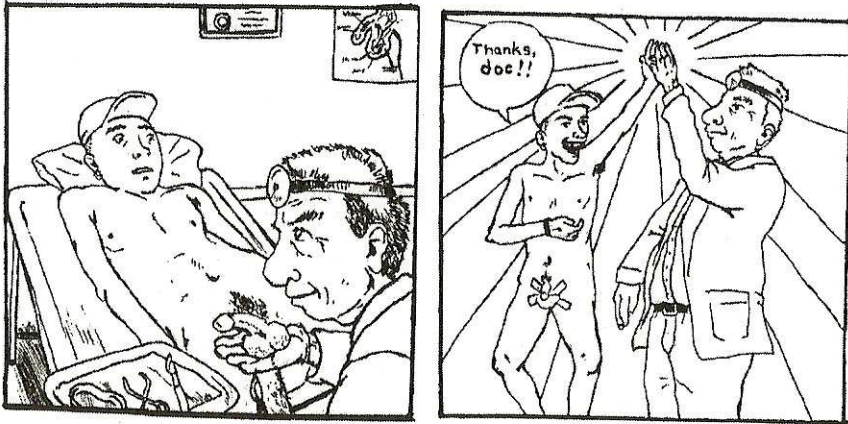
It was a pretty awkward experience. I taped my penis up to give him better access to my scrotum, and he went to work. We had an awkward conversation about stained-glass windows (it used to be a hobby of his, and he did the stained glass at the Country Doctor Community Health Clinic). At one point he asked me if I wanted to see my vas deferens, and I said sure. I looked down and saw a small white tube sticking out of my scrotum, told him, "cool" then he finished up. It took about a total of 5 minutes, and then he told me I could go. I was given a small cup to collect my semen in later to have analyzed and then I went home to sit around and watch movies.

That evening I threw myself a vasectomy party, and my only friends who showed up were those who were so enchanted by the novelty of the party that they had to come, despite the awkwardness of the theme. I ate yummy vegan food with my friends while resting in a comfortable couch, holding an icepack to my crotch.



The Recovery & Follow Up

I was extra careful with the recovery. I did a pretty solid week of resting and doing nothing except going to work at my chill teen-center job and watching movies. No running, no quickly turning, no riding a bicycle. Then next week I took it pretty easy but not as much as the first. I was told to wait two weeks before masturbating again, which I did. Then after that you're supposed to ejaculate 15 times, then give them the sample of your semen. It came out perfect - no sperm!



(mostly) Stupid Questions & (mostly) Sarcastic Answers

Do you still ejaculate semen?

No, you ejaculate DUST. Uhh, of course you ejaculate semen. Sperm is just one component of semen.

Will being too young affect your ability to get one?

Probably, but you can always ask. I was 23 when I got mine.

Can you "save" sperm for later by having it frozen?

Nope - not DIY, anyway. You can get it frozen in a cryobank indefinitely, after it's gone through a shitload of tests to see if it's "viable" and "clean." If you're a millionaire, you might want to consider this option.

The Good

Let me say first of all that it's pretty incredible to have sex with someone with absolutely zero risk of pregnancy. "Liberating" is a good way to describe how it feels. It's also a form of birth control that involves nothing synthetic - no latex, no invasive birth control device, etc. It doesn't require anyone to be on hormones. It doesn't require constant vigilance from women with their cycles and hormone levels. On one hand it's a completely lazy way to not have babies. On the other hand it's a completely pro-feminist birth control method. And it's vegan - no animal byproducts or ingredients tested on animals!

The Bad

If you want all the joys of a vasectomy but still want to have babies down the road, you're out of luck. Vasectomies should always be considered permanent (though they can often be reversed if you have \$\$ and luck). Obviously, vasectomies don't have any effect on either giving or receiving STD's - so you should always use condoms with new partners. Also, there's a few risks like bad physical reactions to the vasectomies, or the rare unexpected auto-reversal (more on those things later).

"You're Going To Change Your Mind"

Vasectomies should be considered permanent. However, you can pay about \$2500 or more to have a reversal (a vasovasostomy) done, with expected success rates traditionally being at about 50%, more or less depending on how long ago the vasectomy was done. However, technology develops over time, success rates and possibly costs will improve.

The way that I see it, if I by chance decide to change my mind and try to get a reversal and it's unsuccessful, that's the hand that life gave me and I'll make due. There are people in this world who never have children who live perfectly fulfilled lives.

Still, my dad had a vasectomy reversed before he had me and my older brother, so you never know.

The Cost

Washington State has this incredible program called "Take Charge" which allows lower-income people to get free birth control, including vasectomies and tubal ligations. So, using Take Charge you can get you vasectomy for free! I've heard rumors of people giving free vasectomies to drug users, or people giving money to those getting snipped (but that may have ended after a huge outcry of those offers being totally racist). It's possible to also check your insurance (if you got it) to see if it will cover the cost. Otherwise, a vasectomy can run you about \$450 or more.

