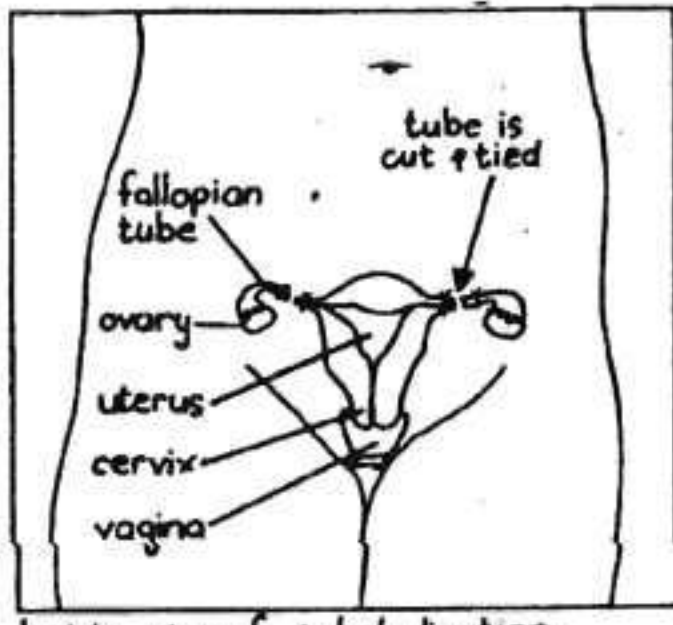
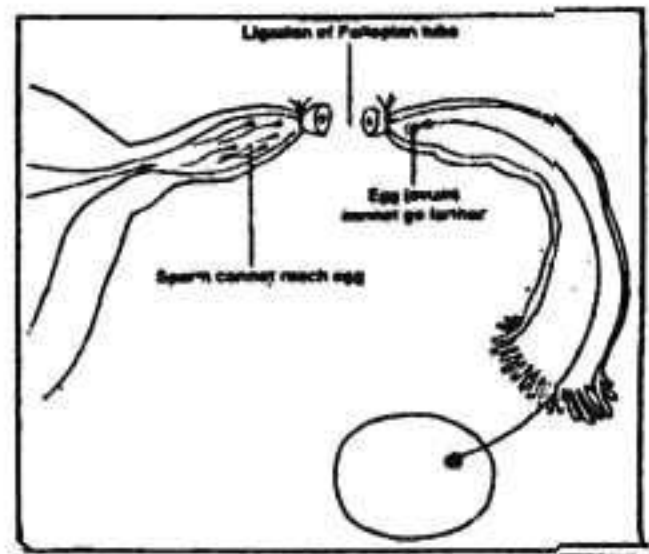




Outside view of tubal ligation.



Inside view of tubal ligation.



The sperm and the egg cannot reach each other to form a foetus.

■ STERILISATION FOR WOMEN

Female sterilisation is called tubal ligation, although people often talk about it as 'having your tubes tied'.

How does tubal ligation prevent pregnancy?

Tubal ligation prevents pregnancy by cutting the fallopian tubes so that eggs from the woman's ovaries cannot move to the womb to meet the man's sperm. And the man's sperm cannot move up the tube to meet the woman's egg.

How is a tubal ligation done?

This operation is done with an instrument called a laparoscope. This instrument looks like a thin telescope and has a very bright light built into it.

The woman is usually given a general anaesthetic which puts her to sleep for the operation. Sometimes she is given an injection which prevents her from feeling pain, but she stays awake during the operation.

Once she is ready, a small cut is made on the lower part of her stomach. Another cut is

When you're through having babies

Sterilisation is a big decision for a man or woman, because it means a permanent prevention of pregnancy. In other words, once you are sterilised, you will never have children. SPEAK looks at what happens to a man or woman who wants to be sterilised

made just beneath the belly button. The laparoscope is pushed through the cut beneath her belly button. Another instrument is pushed through the other cut near her fallopian tube.

This instrument takes hold of the fallopian tube and either cuts or ties it. Sometimes a small metal clip is put around

each tube. The operation usually involves a short stay in hospital.

Will a tubal ligation affect a woman's sex life?

Like a vasectomy, tubal ligation does not affect a woman's sex life. She can have sex as

soon as it feels comfortable for her. A woman will not lose interest in sex and will continue to enjoy a healthy and active sex life.

Is the operation always a success?

The operation has a high success rate, but not as high as vasectomy. About one in 300 women becomes pregnant within two years of the operation. This can happen if there was an egg present when the operation was done. This is why a contraceptive should be used up to and just after the operation. Another reason could be if the woman's fallopian tube had a clip put on it and the clip was not put on properly. There is also a very, very small chance that the tube joins together again.

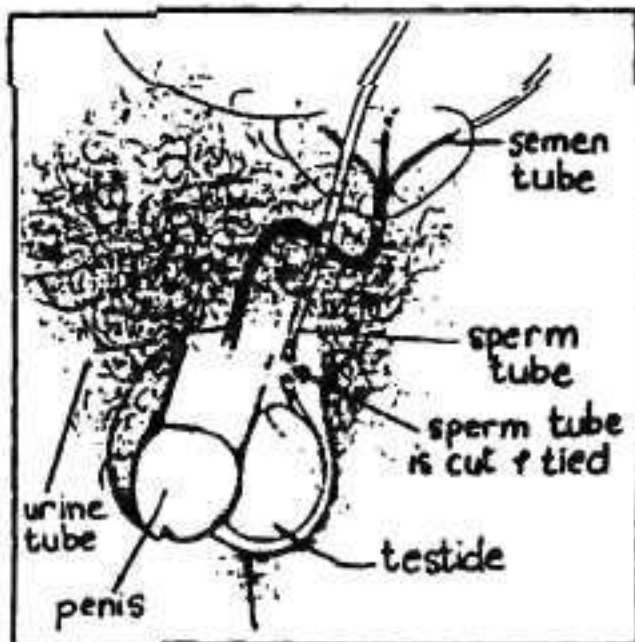
■ STERILISATION FOR MEN

Male sterilisation is called a vasectomy. This is a simple and safe operation that takes less than half an hour. A small cut is made at the top of the man's scrotum. The scrotum is the bag of skin that holds and protects the man's penis. It is usually done under local anaesthetic. After the operation, the penis may be bruised and a bit painful. The man would not have to stay in hospital after the operation.

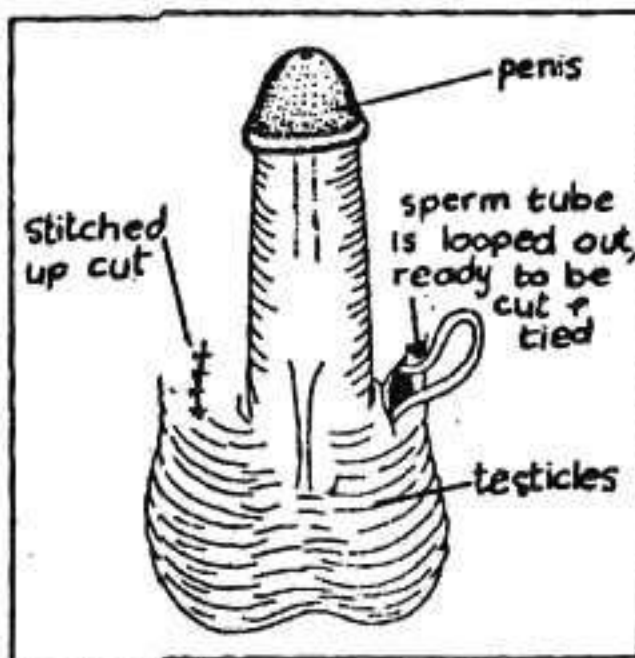
How does a vasectomy prevent pregnancy?

When a man ejaculates, he produces white liquid called semen. The semen has sperm in it. When the sperm joins

Sterilisation does not affect your sexual performance



Inside view of vasectomy.



Outside view of vasectomy.

with a woman's egg, she will fall pregnant.

When a man has a vasectomy, the tube which carries the sperm is cut.

The man still produces semen, but there are no sperm in it. However, after the operation, it is recommended that a man use condoms until he has ejaculated 30 times. This is because there is still sperm stored in his body which takes a while to disappear.

Will the vasectomy affect a man's sex life?

Men seem to worry that a vasectomy will affect their sex life. As long as the man is very sure he wants the vasectomy, his sex life should not change after the operation. It does not make him lose interest in sex and does not change his enjoyment. Because the sperm make up just one small part of his semen, he will not even notice a difference when he ejaculates.

SPEAK asked Xoli why he had a vasectomy and what his sex life was like after the operation.

"When my partner and I decided we did not want any more children, I felt it was my turn to take responsibility for prevention. After all, she was the one who had been on contraceptives throughout our relationship.

"At first I was nervous because I thought the operation would take away my manhood," laughed Xoli, a bit embarrassed.

"Actually," he added, "it has improved my sex life and has certainly not destroyed my manhood!"

Can the operation be changed back

It is difficult and costly to reverse this operation and it may not succeed. Reversing the operation has been found to be successful in two or three men out of every ten men. Health workers we spoke to said men who have vasectomies should see it as final. This is why a man must be very sure he wants it done. ☼