

## DR. GALANTE'S POST-VASECTOMY EXPECTATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

- **How long to expect pain?** Most men require about **one week** to feel normal again after the procedure. Lucky patients will have no pain at all. Unlucky patients may have some discomfort lasting a few weeks or longer. About 1-2% of patients will experience pain after the first 3 months, but this “chronic” pain usually resolves without any major interventions. Sometimes there are periods of no pain intermixed with “flare-ups” of soreness.
- **Where should I anticipate pain and what nature of pain is expected?** Many men feel a mild discomfort in the scrotum (including in the testicles or near the testicles), in the area of the groin (i.e. alongside the penis), and/or extending up into the abdomen. The discomfort may extend into the groin/abdomen because the testes originate in the abdomen in embryonic life and drag their nerve supply with them as they migrate into the scrotum. So, any issue in the scrotal contents can be perceived as an abdominal process. For the same reason, vasectomy may cause abdominal pain just like you’ve been “kicked in the nuts.” Some patients have a burning sensation at the incision site, and this is to be expected as it heals over the first week or so. The pain may not be symmetrical (i.e. one side might hurt worse, or the location of the pain may be different on each side). Asymmetry is typical and is no cause for alarm.
- **Will there be bruising?** There may be bruising (black/blue/purple) typically seen on the scrotal skin, but sometimes this may extend up the inguinal area towards the penis. The bruising may first be seen anytime within the first week postoperatively (i.e. bruising may start after a few days). Unless the entire scrotum and surrounding skin is completely bruised, we typically don’t worry too much about seeing bruising. Please note that any bruising may take weeks to resolve. There may be blood in the semen for up to a few months after the procedure. This is no reason for concern.
- **Will there be swelling?** Many men get some swelling. The swelling can come in several forms. It is very common to have some generalized swelling in the scrotum. That appears on day one or two and then slowly resolves. Many men also develop swelling above one or both testis that feels like a small sausage or nodule in the scrotum. This swelling is typically caused by blood leaking into the sheath around the vas. This blood will be reabsorbed by the body over the next few weeks. Another common form of swelling occurs just above or around the testis. This can occur anywhere from 3 days to 3 months after the vasectomy. This swelling feels like a crescent on the back of the testis or a small ball just above the testis. This is a normal response to the surgery, and is thought to be caused by the early scar formation in some cases, and the normal reabsorption and recycling of sperm in other cases. Either way, this is best managed by taking ibuprofen 600mg (three tablets of 200mg), three times per day with meals (i.e. with breakfast, with lunch, and with dinner). Take the ibuprofen until the tenderness subsides, then add a day. In general, though, don’t take ibuprofen at this high dose for more than seven days. Contact Dr. Galante if the swelling is larger than a golf ball or if the swelling is associated with progressive, significant new pain or fever, or if it does not resolve as expected above.
- **What medications are recommended for pain?** Dr. Galante recommends taking over-the-counter ibuprofen 600mg before bed on the night of the procedure, then again with breakfast and with dinner for the next three days after the procedure. Ibuprofen may be used as needed after the first three days for flare-ups of soreness. If you develop side effects (most commonly stomach-upset) please stop the ibuprofen and notify Dr. Galante. Tylenol can be used to supplement the ibuprofen as needed. Tylenol will not interact with ibuprofen. You may take 1000mg of Tylenol every 8 hours. Do not exceed 3200mg Tylenol in 24 hours.
- **How will I know if something is wrong (when should I text the doctor)? The following should be reported to your surgeon:**
  - Fevers/chills or a general feeling of “illness” within the first few weeks after the procedure
  - Postoperative pain that is severe beyond expectation and not adequately managed with the aforementioned medications
  - Large swelling in the scrotum (i.e. golf ball-sized swelling or larger) or new swelling associated with significantly greater level of pain, or if the swelling does not resolve as anticipated based on aforementioned instructions
  - Significant bruising (i.e. the entire scrotum and areas of skin around the scrotum are black/blue).
  - Anything that is not to be expected based on these instructions and for which you are concerned.
- **When can I resume...?**
  - **Sex:** Avoid any sexual activity or ejaculation for one week after the procedure. Many men feel fine after a few days and are anxious to get back to their normal sexual routine, but be advised that the surgical site is quite sensitive

and you may prolong the recovery by getting started too early. Getting the occasional erection is fine. Remember to use other forms of contraception until you are told that your post-op semen sample is sperm-free.

- **Walking:** You may walk or drive immediately after the procedure, but the focus should be resting for the first 24 hours. Occasional short walks and mandatory maneuvers (i.e. going to the bathroom, cooking, etc) are OK during this period.
  - **Helping with kids:** Avoid lifting/interacting with any small children that may knock your groin for 24 hours after the procedure. After the first 24 hours, you should be able to safely (and carefully) resume most childcare responsibilities.
  - **Exercise/Lifting:** Avoid for one week any workout that puts direct stress on or causes a lot of scrotal movement (examples: running, biking, strenuous sports, cross-fit, etc.). Strength training or other exercise that does not directly impact the scrotum (i.e. isolated weight lifting or golf) should be safe to continue 2 days after the procedure. Otherwise, when in doubt: if the exercise doesn't cause discomfort, it's probably fine.
  - **Work:** Depends on your vocation. The key is that you should avoid any significant impact on the scrotum (see "exercise" above) for one week. Sedentary (i.e. computer or office-based work) should be fine to resume the day after the procedure. If you have a job that can't guarantee that you can avoid impactful events to the scrotum (i.e. construction), ask for a doctor's note.
  - **Swimming/Soaking:** Avoid soaking in tubs/pools/lakes/oceans for one week after the procedure. The skin opening is not closed at the end of the procedure. It's best to minimize irritation to the site as it heals.
  - **Showers:** are fine at any time the day after the procedure. You may discard the scrotal gauze pad immediately prior to taking your first shower.
- **What's the deal with the scrotal support or ice packs?**
    - We recommend wearing tight, supportive underwear or a scrotal support the day of the procedure and the next 2 days. If the supportive underwear is helpful to you in preventing soreness, you may continue to wear it after the first 2 days. Most men go back to their preferred underwear by one week after the procedure.
    - No need for icepacks, they are simply not part of our routine, but there is no harm in applying one if it makes you feel better.
  - **What is the follow-up plan?**
    - No routine postoperative visit is required. Dr. Galante will typically check in on you via phone or text within the first week after the procedure. If you are having unanticipated issues/concerns, please text Dr. Galante, ideally with your full name included. You may also call Dr. Galante or the office if needed, but text is generally best as sometimes Dr. Galante is not immediately available to speak by phone (i.e. operating).
  - **What is the protocol for the postoperative semen sample testing?**
    - **At least twelve (12) weeks and AT LEAST 20 ejaculations** after your vasectomy, mail / bring a **semen sample** to our office. Have plenty of ejaculation to "clear out the tubes." Samples will not be checked early. **If you send in your specimen before 12 weeks or if you lose the mailer** provided at the time of the procedure, we will send to you another mailer for a **fee of \$30** payable by credit card over the phone.
    - If you are **bringing** the sample, it should be in a small container with a lid, such as a pill bottle, baby food jar, etc. The sample should be 30 minutes to 4 hours old. If you are **mailing** the sample, use the mailer and follow the instructions provided. Results will be emailed to the address we have on file for you. **If sperm are still seen**, you can either bring a second sample to the office or we will send another mailer kit 3-4 weeks after the first sample was analyzed .

**Thank you** for placing your confidence in us!

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