



## Patient Information

# Female Sterilisation

### What is Sterilisation?

Female sterilisation is an effective and permanent form of contraception. There is a very small failure rate. Sterilisation is only for people who have decided they do not want any children or further children in the future. It is considered a permanent method of contraception.

Reversal is a complicated operation which is not always successful. Reversal is not usually available on the NHS.

### How is it done?

The tubes between the ovary and the womb (the Fallopian tubes) are cut or blocked with rings or clips. This stops the eggs which are released by the ovary from reaching the sperm.

The operation is usually done under general anaesthetic. For most women the operation is done with the help of a special telescope called a laparoscope. The laparoscope is inserted through a very small cut in your abdomen.

It allows the surgeon to see what they are doing. Another small cut is then made to insert an instrument to apply clips or rings to your tubes. The clips or rings provide a block in the tubes and prevent egg meeting sperm. A larger cut may have to be made, and a more traditional operation done, in some women. This is more likely if you are overweight or have had previous operations.

### How reliable is Female Sterilisation?

Around 5 women out of 1000 will become pregnant after sterilisation. (When no contraception is used, more than 800 out of 1000 sexually active women will become pregnant within one year.) Women can become pregnant because the tubes can come back together again after being cut although this extremely rare. If they were blocked, the clips can work their way off - even when they have been put on correctly

### What are the advantages of Female Sterilisation?

It is permanent and you (and your partner) don't have to think about contraception again.



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## What are the disadvantages of Female Sterilisation?

As it is permanent, some people may regret having the operation in future years, particularly if their circumstances change. Laparoscopic sterilisation is also not as easy to do, or as effective, as male sterilisation (vasectomy). There is a risk from the insertion of the laparoscope which is done 'blind'. This means the surgeon cannot see exactly where they are putting the instrument and it may damage things inside the abdomen. This sounds worrying, but the surgeon will take other precautions to try to avoid causing any harm and, in most cases, this does not happen.

As with any operation there is a risk of a wound infection and the slight risk from a general anaesthetic.

## Will it reduce my sex drive?

No. Sex may seem more enjoyable, as the worry of pregnancy and contraception is removed.

## How soon is it effective?

Laparoscopic sterilisation should be done whilst you have your period. This means you will not have produced an egg yet. In this case the procedure is effective immediately. Robust contraception should be used in the months prior to the procedure

## Some points to consider

Don't consider having the operation unless you and your partner are sure you do not want children, or further children. It is wise not to make the decision at times of crisis or change - for example, after a new baby or termination of pregnancy. Don't make the decision if there are any major problems in your relationship with your partner. It will not solve any sexual problems.

Doctors normally like to be sure that both partners are happy with the decision before doing this permanent procedure. However, it is not a legal requirement to get your partner's permission. If you have any doubts and questions, make sure you discuss these with your doctor or practice nurse.

Have you considered the alternatives? Female Sterilisation is not 100% effective. Other *reversible* methods of contraception are more effective, such as the intrauterine system (IUS), contraceptive implants and injections.

Also, male sterilisation is easier to do and more effective.

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**For your notes:**

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**Women's Health Outpatients 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor**

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Information

From 1st January 2019 smoking will not be permitted on any NHS site in England. Smoking will not be permitted within any of our buildings or anywhere outside on our sites. Smoking facilities will not be provided. Please be considerate of others when vaping in hospital grounds.

**This information sheet is available to order in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email [gwh.pals@nhs.net](mailto:gwh.pals@nhs.net)**

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