

## Obstetrics and Gynaecology

# Sterilisation during a caesarean section

### What is female sterilisation?

Female sterilisation is a permanent and irreversible way of preventing pregnancy.

### Is sterilisation reversible?

Reversing sterilisation is not available on the NHS. If reversal is attempted, you would usually have to pay for it and it doesn't always work. This is why it is important to be sure you don't want any more babies before making decision.

### How is the procedure performed?

The procedure is performed through the same cut as a caesarean section. The doctors stop the eggs and sperm from meeting (fertilisation) by cutting or tying the fallopian tubes. This is called "tubal ligation."

### How well does female sterilisation work?

It works really well, there is only a 1 in 200 chance it can fail. This means that 1 woman in every 200 who has the procedure still get pregnant someday. If it is done during a caesarean section, the chance of it not working might be higher, because the body changes during pregnancy.

### Will you still have periods after sterilisation?

Yes, sterilisation does not stop periods and does not change your monthly cycle.



### **What are the risks?**

- The procedure is permanent and not reversible
- There is a failure rate of 1 in 200 as discussed above
- If a woman does get pregnant after sterilisation, there is a risk that the pregnancy may develop in the fallopian tube. This is called an ectopic pregnancy and may be life threatening.

If performed at the same time as a caesarean section many of the risks of sterilisation will be the same. These can be found on the information leaflet for caesarean section. Undergoing sterilisation at the time of caesarean section does not increase the risk of your caesarean section.

### **What happens if you fall pregnant after sterilisation?**

If you miss a period after sterilisation, you should take a pregnancy test right away. If it's positive, you need to see a doctor, and they will give you a scan to check if the pregnancy is in the right place and safe.

### **Consent for sterilisation**

Sterilisation involves making a big and permanent decision, so we cannot get your consent for the procedure on the same day as your caesarean section if it has not been discussed with you before. This is because it is really important that you have time to consider your options and discuss these with your partner.

### **Will it be done during a caesarean section?**

If you have asked for sterilisation to be done during your caesarean section, sometimes it still can't happen. This might be because your caesarean section has to be done quickly as an emergency rather than as a planned operation, or if there is a complication during surgery that makes it unsafe.

### **Other options**

There are other ways to prevent pregnancy. These include:

## Patient Information

- **Male Sterilisation (Vasectomy):** This is when a man has a small operation so can't make a woman pregnant. This is done using local anaesthetic and works better than female sterilisation. It only fails 1 time in 2000. If you are in a long term relationship you and your partner may want to consider both forms of sterilisation and decide which is best for you.
- **Contraceptive methods:** This includes the progesterone intra-uterine system, progesterone-only contraceptive pill, combined oestrogen and progesterone contraceptive pill, barrier methods such as condoms or an injectable implant.

## Further Information

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact:  
Maternity Department, UHCW NHS Trust, Clifford Bridge Road, CV2 2DX  
Telephone: 024 7696 7339

For more information about contraceptive methods, see your GP.

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### Document history

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