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Headline: [Watch] Three myths about vasectomies busted

Blurb: Myths and stigma linked to vasectomies often stop men from using the procedure to prevent pregnancy. This video unpacks these myths and why they're false.

Bullet points:

- Men have two contraceptive choices: [condoms and vasectomies](#). A [vasectomy](#) is a short procedure during which the cord that delivers sperm cells into semen is closed. It's cheaper and easier than female sterilisation.
- The uptake of vasectomies [has fallen by 1.2% in South Africa's public health sector between 2018 and 2019](#), while female sterilisations increased by 7% during that period.
- Health workers say men want to know how painful vasectomies are, if the procedure can be undone and if it will change their sex lives. The short answer is no. We explain why in this video.

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South African men have two contraceptive choices: male condoms and vasectomies.

A [2016 national survey](#) found that almost all men & women know about male condoms.

But a recent report shows a [1.2% decrease in the uptake of vasectomies](#) at government hospitals between 2018 and 2019.

During the same time female sterilisation operations increased by 7%, even though vasectomies are easier and cheaper to do.

Why are fewer men using vasectomies?

Myth 1: "Vasectomies are just too painful"

Doctors take careful steps to make sure patients don't feel pain when they get vasectomies.

Physicians use local anaesthesia and numbing cream to cut how much pain people feel.

Men who feel being awake during the procedure is too much, can choose to be sedated.

In a [British study](#) of 600 men, guys ranked their pain 3.5 out of 10 on a pain measurement scale.

Zero meant no pain and 10 is the worst possible pain.

Myth 2: “My sex life will get worse after having a vasectomy”

A [vasectomy](#) simply prevents sperm, which is made in the testes, from being delivered into a gland where semen is stored before a man has an orgasm.

Semen is a whitish fluid that keeps sperm cells alive after they leave the body.

Surgeons cut off the sperm supply by closing the sperm delivery cord called the vas deferens.

Men can still get erections and climax after vasectomies.

Sperm makes up less than 1% of semen, so vasectomies don't change the amount of fluid men ejaculate.

Myth 3: A vasectomy can easily be reversed

Vasectomies are a [permanent form of birth control](#).

Even though a [reversal procedure exists](#), urologists say it's a costly, time-consuming operation that [requires highly specialised surgery](#).

[South African law](#) requires men to sign a form where you agree to having the procedure by choice.

Research shows that men in their twenties or thirties [are usually the ones who regret having a vasectomy or change their minds](#).

This is why the [contraception rule book](#) for health workers says men have to be counselled before getting a vasectomy, so that they understand the choice they're making.

This story was produced by the [Bhekisisa Centre for Health Journalism](#). Sign up for the [newsletter](#).