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Sterilisation and Birth Control at Caesarean Section

Information and Choices

You have been given this leaflet because you are considering being sterilised. If you need to have a Caesarean section for this baby, it may be possible to perform the sterilisation at the same time.

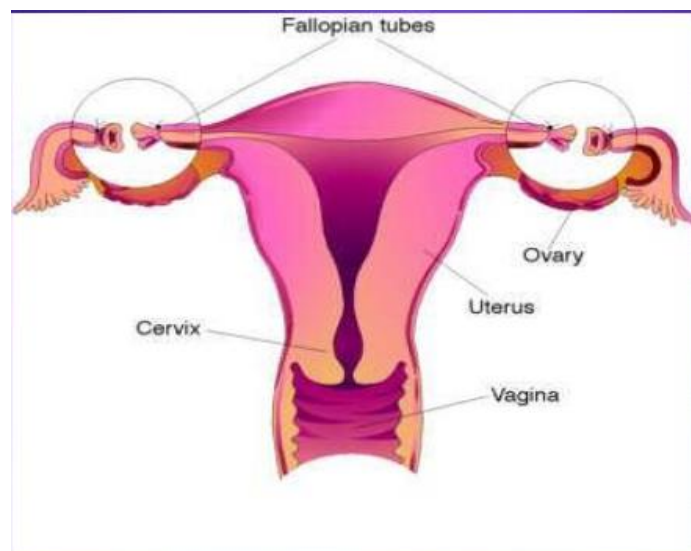
Did you know?

You can get pregnant as soon as three weeks after having a baby. The most common reason for termination of pregnancy is getting pregnant too soon after having had a baby.

It is never too early to plan your contraception.

What is sterilisation?

Sterilisation is a permanent and irreversible form of contraception. It is performed by causing a blockage in the fallopian tubes to stop the egg and sperm meeting. This can be performed by either removing a piece of the fallopian tubes and tying the ends, or by placing a clip across the fallopian tube.



It is performed immediately after the baby is delivered and the placenta has been removed from the uterus (womb).

Being sterilised does not change your periods, and no hormones are used.

When sterilisation is done at the same time as a Caesarean section, it is more likely you will regret your decision, so it is important to consider all your options. This is even more likely if your baby is born early (under 36 weeks' gestation) and so may not be performed in this situation.

Sterilisation can still be performed at a later date after you have recovered from your Caesarean section. You would need to talk to your GP or Family Planning Service, but this would mean having another operation.

Risks

One in 200 sterilisations will not work. If you get pregnant after a sterilisation, it is much more likely that the pregnancy will be in the fallopian tube (an ectopic pregnancy) and this can be dangerous, so you would need to see a doctor early.

What are the alternatives?

There are alternatives to sterilisation but these also carry risk.

- Male sterilisation/vasectomy – 1 in 2,000 vasectomies will not work.
- Hormone coil – For every 3000 women with the hormone coil 1 will get pregnant. Women may find their periods are lighter or do not have a period. It can be removed very easily. It can also be fitted at the same time as a Caesarean section is performed (again immediately after the baby and placenta are delivered) and can be easily removed at a later date if necessary. It lasts for up to five years before it will need to be removed or replaced.
- Copper coil – as with the hormone coil about 1 in 3000 women will get pregnant with the copper coil. There are no hormones in this coil, so your periods will be the same. However a small number of women find their periods a little bit heavier. It can be removed very easily. It can be fitted at the same time as a Caesarean section is performed (again immediately after the baby and placenta are delivered) and can be easily removed at a later date if necessary. It lasts for up to ten years, depending on the type used.
- Contraceptive implant – about 1 in 10,000 women with an implant will still get pregnant. Women may find that their periods are lighter or do not have a period. It requires a small procedure to insert the implant in your arm, and then to remove it when needed. Each implant lasts up to three years. It can be fitted as soon as you have had your baby but you may have to go to a family planning clinic to have it fitted.
- Contraceptive injection – about 1 in 100 women will still get pregnant. It is a hormone injection that can be given soon after having your baby and will last for three months. You may have irregular bleeding during this time.

All of these methods can be used, even if you are breastfeeding. For more information, speak to your doctor, midwife or family planning clinic. You must tell your doctor or midwife as soon as possible if you would like to be sterilised or have a coil fitted. You cannot just ask when you have your baby.