



CARE INSTRUCTIONS

KAISER PERMANENTE

Postpartum Sterilization

Your Kaiser Permanente Care Instructions

If you decide that you do not want to become pregnant again, you can choose to be sterilized after giving birth. This is called postpartum sterilization. Your doctor or other health care professional will cut, tie, or block your fallopian tubes. This will keep an egg from moving down the tubes to be fertilized.

You can have this done 24 to 36 hours after a vaginal birth. If you have a cesarean birth, you can be sterilized right after delivery, during the same surgery.

Make sure you want this surgery. Sterilization is usually permanent. However, in rare cases (about 20 out of 1,000 in 10 years), the surgery is not successful, and you can become pregnant.

If you decide that you do want to get pregnant again, it may be possible to put the tubes back together at a later time. But you still may not be able to get pregnant afterward. The procedure is expensive, and insurance usually does not pay for it.

How is sterilization done?

The surgery is called tubal ligation. You will receive anesthesia, which is medicine to prevent pain during surgery. If you have a vaginal birth, the doctor or other health care professional will make a small cut below your belly button. The doctor or other health care professional cuts and ties off the ends of the tubes. This can also be done during a cesarean birth. You can also be sterilized later if you are not sure whether you want to have the procedure now.

You may be able to go home the same day. The doctor or other health care professional will tell you what pain medicine to take. You will have a follow-up visit several weeks after surgery.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. As a partner in your health care, you can do things like keep all scheduled visits, be sure you know the results of all tests and labs ordered as part of your care, and keep an up-to-date personal list of the medicines you are taking. Know how to contact

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us between visits, and call your doctor or other health care professional if you have signs that you are having problems.

What are the risks of sterilization?

Tubal ligation is usually very safe. However, all surgery has some risk. There is a very small risk of pregnancy, usually in the first year. In these rare cases, the tubes grow back together. Sometimes a new passage forms and allows the egg to be fertilized.

If the surgery fails and you become pregnant, you have a greater chance of having an ectopic pregnancy, which is a pregnancy in the fallopian tube. While this risk is very slight, an ectopic pregnancy is dangerous.

You have a very small risk of infection or bleeding. You also could have problems from the anesthesia.

When should you call your doctor or other health care professional?

- You want more information about this surgery.

How can you learn more about sterilization?

- *Log on:* members.kp.org. Search for **female sterilization** in the **Health encyclopedia**.
- *Look in:* Kaiser Permanente Healthwise Handbook.

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