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### Where can I learn more about Natural Family Planning?

- Billings Ovulation Method Assn.  
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- Family of the Americas Foundation  
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- Institute for Natural Family Planning  
(414) 288-3854 [www.mu.edu/nursing/NFP](http://www.mu.edu/nursing/NFP)
- Natural Family Planning International  
[www.nfpandmore.org](http://www.nfpandmore.org)
- Northwest Family Services  
(503) 215-6377 <http://www.nwfs.org/couples-a-singles/natural-family-planning.html>
- One More Soul NFP Center  
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- FertilityCareCenters of America  
(402) 390-6600 [www.fertilitycare.org](http://www.fertilitycare.org)
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops  
(202) 541-3040 <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/natural-family-planning/>
- One More Soul maintains on its website [www.OMSoul.com](http://www.OMSoul.com) a *Directory of NFP-Only Physicians, NFP Centers, and NFP Teachers.*

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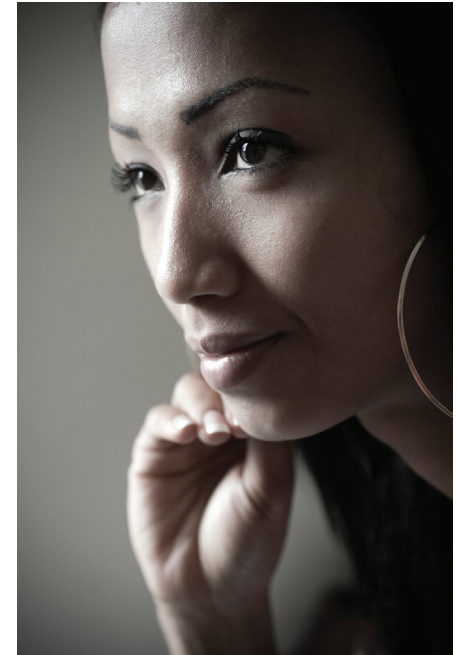
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## Female Sterilization



### What Every Woman Should Know about

- *Tubal Ligation*
- *Sterilization by Tubal Inserts*
- *Sterilization Reversal*

by Liliana Cote de Bejarano, MD, MPH

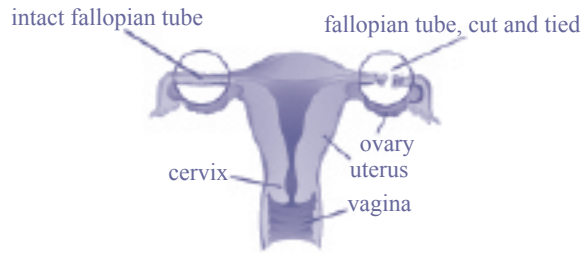


## What is female sterilization?

Female sterilization means making a woman permanently infertile, usually by cutting, tying, or blocking her fallopian tubes.

## What are the fallopian tubes?

The fallopian tubes are two organs situated sideways in the lower abdomen attached to the uterus. They conduct the ovum from the ovaries toward the uterus and also nurture the ovum and the sperm. If fertilization occurs, the fallopian tubes nurture and transport the human embryo to the uterus.



## What is tubal ligation?

Tubal ligation involves closing off the fallopian tubes by cutting, burning, tying, or fastening a clip (or a combination of these methods) to cause permanent sterility (infertility). It is a surgical procedure carried out under anesthesia.

Two common surgical procedures for getting one's "tubes tied" are:

**Laparoscopy:** Usually small incisions are made in the lower abdomen. Carbon dioxide gas is pumped in to inflate the abdomen, and a fiber-optic light is inserted. Then, surgical instruments are inserted to cut, tie, or burn the fallopian tubes.

**Mini-laparotomy:** This procedure requires a small incision in the lower abdomen. The fallopian tubes are closed by clips, burned, or cut and tied.

## What is non-surgical sterilization?

There are new non-surgical methods of permanent female sterilization. In a procedure called hysteroscopy, micro-inserts are passed through the vagina, cervix, and uterus, and placed in the fallopian tubes. The micro-inserts cause a tissue barrier to form that prevents sperm from reaching the egg.

## Does female sterilization have health risks?

### Risks from anesthesia and surgery

- Infection<sup>1</sup>
- Bleeding<sup>2</sup>
- Respiratory problems
- Adverse effects from anesthetics
- Damage to abdominal organs<sup>3</sup>
- Bowel perforation<sup>4</sup>
- Death

### Risks from tubal ligation itself

- Change of ovarian function<sup>5</sup>
- Ovarian Cyst<sup>6</sup>
- Ectopic pregnancy<sup>7</sup>
- Remorse<sup>8</sup>

Long-term psychological effects such as depression and anxiety have been reported by women after tubal ligation.<sup>9</sup> Stress interfering with sex has been reported in women after tubal ligation.<sup>10</sup> The probability of undergoing hysterectomy within 14 years after sterilization is 17% per 100 procedures.<sup>11</sup>

## Is sterilization 100% effective?

NO. Failure rates can range from 1% for laparoscopic sterilization up to 13% for hysteroscopic sterilization<sup>12</sup>. When pregnancy occurs after a female sterilization procedure the risk for ectopic pregnancy is 7.3 per 1000 procedures and can be higher for the newest procedures.

## Warning!

Sterilization does not protect against sexually transmitted diseases including AIDS.

## What if I change my mind?



Many sterilized women later desire to have their fertility restored. Some have entered new relationships and want a child with their new partner; some want a return to physical wholeness; some believe that they have done something immoral and are seeking spiritual restoration. There are, however, significant obstacles to sterilization reversal; for example, the surgery is more extensive and expensive than the original procedure, and it is typically not covered by insurance. Also, a return of fertility is not guaranteed; the success rate varies depending on a woman's age, the type of sterilization performed, and the skill of the surgeon.

## Is sterilization morally acceptable?

Before 1930, no Christian church accepted sterilization or any form of contraception. The Catholic Church and some Protestant churches still teach that intentional sterilization is an immoral form of birth control.

## What are my options?

If you are married, the modern methods of Natural Family Planning (NFP) are the safest, healthiest, and least expensive alternatives for family planning.

If you are single, abstinence is the best option and always works!