

Adam's PVP Diary

I'm 37 and have been suffering from low-grade chronic testicle pain since I was a teenager. At 21 I was diagnosed with a cyst (left testicle) and was told that surgery may or may not solve the problem long term. The operation was done under a general and recovery went fine, in fact I was pain free almost immediately and stayed that way for nearly 6 months. Alas the pain eventually came back and I just learned to live with it. Mostly minor, sometimes better, sometimes not - usually worse after heavy exercise. Fortunately it never had an adverse affect on my sex life, in fact both of my wife's pregnancies happened the first month we tried.

OK, so that's the background. After a few recent pregnancy scares and ruling out female birth control (for medical reasons I won't go into) a vasectomy seemed the best route. The doctor was picked for his experience (over 9000 performed to date) and I chose NSV (no scalpel) surgery. I discussed my past history and was told there shouldn't be any higher risks to the procedure from the cysts. Even sperm-banked at <http://www.Xytex.com> so no reversal needed on the remote chance we decided to have more biological offspring one day. Before the operation I was told that some men will have swelling after the procedure which should go away with ibuprofen in a few days. I figured "How bad could it be?".

Answer - bad, really bad. Everything started fine, with a local anesthetic applied and the first few minutes uneventful. All of sudden I felt mind-blowing pain and intense nausea and sweat started pouring out of every pore. 20 minutes of hell and a few hurls later I was limping out of the office with a scrotal support and hope that the worst was behind me.

The next 48 hours were actually bearable, just minor pain and discomfort but on the 3rd day the lower part of my right testicle began turning purple and swelled to about twice the normal size. The pain of standing up with no support was indescribable, and I was forced to take cold showers while "holding the boys" or risk passing out. Interestingly enough the left testicle (the "bad" one) seemed OK.

By day 7 the pain lessened a little to where I was able to hobble around the house slowly but anything more still hurt like hell. Luckily I'm in an occupation where I work from home often or I'd be screwed. The purple swelling was confirmed as a scrotal hematoma which by the third week abated.

Today is day 23 and I've only been outside the house a few times since the operation. Both testicles are still equally swollen (about twice normal size) and about a week ago I also developed a jelly-bean sized granuloma on the left side and a smaller one on the right. The pain varies between annoying and downright show-stopping, some days worse than others. Cold packs and Advil help a little and at this point I'm able to sleep on my side again by folding a pillow in half and wedging it between my legs. I'm a very active person and it's taking all my energy not to slip into depression right now. This is definitely the worse thing I've been through.

At this point I'm guessing that since the hematoma is all but gone my body is just having a really hard time reabsorbing sperm, and I'm hoping with every digit crossed it doesn't turn into a long term epididymus problem.

Day 25

Worst day yet. I pushed things and drove to work for a couple of hours (15 minutes each way, desk job) and am paying the piper for it. Pain is so intense I've been throwing up every few hours. After one of the nastier episodes my 3 year old daughter told me that it's OK Daddy, adults are allowed to cry too. Despite everything else the swelling has continued to abate. Best position is standing with my feet akimbo or lying down on my back.

Day 26

Back to the Doctors office and he's really concerned about the pain. He confirms the left granuloma at 1.5cm and a right one at 1cm, but the physical exam thus far hasn't hurt much, even while sizing the granulomas. But when he got to the bottom/backside of both testicles I almost passed out. Afterwards he pointed out that inflammation is minimal and definitely not proportional to the pain I'm feeling.

We discuss the possibility of infection and although he didn't see any visible signs mentioned he wouldn't rule out Chlamydia or some other opportunistic bacteria. He wrote me a prescription for Doxycycline. Also got prescriptions for Vicodin [hydrocodone] for nighttime, Tylox [oxycodone] for when it's really bad, and Darvoset [propoxyphene] to make it through the days at work (we were both thinking positive)

Overall I'm pleased with his concern and frankness and we both agreed to give it some more time. It really helped having my wife there to drive home the point of how bad it's been. She's been totally amazing through all of this. I'm very lucky in that regard.

Day 27

Started off the morning feeling much better until our English Mastiff puppy's massive tail found its mark. Of course he didn't mean it but in classic puppy jubilation swung it around and I just wasn't on the ball - both figuratively and literally. A Mastiff's tail btw if you haven't seen it is about as long and wide as a string of sausages and attacks everything in its path with deadly speed when the rest of the animal gets excited. Now I know this is a bit of a tangent but I believe others with chronic pain know about living in a constant quasi-Ninja state of mind. No matter what's going around me or where I am, over the years I've trained myself to block all threats within a foot of the family jewels with almost super-human reaction time and strength. That instinct failed me big time this round.

4 Weeks

Today is a good day, with a noticeable reduction in pain and tenderness. It may sound strange but it just feels like my body has a better handle on things instead of it being a runaway train. Despite the examination, travel and tail whipping of the past few days I'm back underneath the "I want to kill myself. Not sure if the antibiotics are helping or things are just taking their course.

5 Weeks

The last week has been a roller coaster ride, with some days bearable and some not. The granulomas are healing nicely but the testicle pain is as bad as ever.

I've forced myself back into half days at work but productivity continues to suffer. Believe it or not to add to the stress I'm in the middle of a merger between my company and another through all of this and am eager for it to be complete so I can focus on the options for getting better. Next week I go back to the doctor when the antibiotics are done. If he has no further advice I'll insist on a referral for a PVP specialist. If he doesn't give me one I'll call my old Uro back in NY who I'm sure will point me in the right direction, although based on all the Internet research I've done the last few weeks I'm not optimistic that there's much more that can be done except take more antibiotics or start to consider a reversal or some other type of surgery.

As a sidebar my wife is convinced I produce more sperm than the average guy and that may be contributing to the problem. When I sent in my samples to the sperm bank a few months ago the counts were way above average (4 times normal) so maybe she has a point. I wonder if anyone has ever done a study on pre-vasectomy sperm counts to see if there's a correlation with pain afterwards?

Driving seems to make things much worse, although being a passenger isn't really different from lying on the couch so I've been trying to get out at least once a day and not fall further into depression. Could really use a time machine right about now. I feel like I'm in a movie part that I never tried out for.

6 Weeks

I can finally say there has been a measurable improvement from the previous week. My body is starting to get a handle on the healing, both visibly and in the way I'm feeling pain. Up until this past week the pain was always there and often extreme, now it's more often sore overall with occasional shooting pains like before, but less frequently and at a lower intensity. As bad as it still is I can now function enough to get things done some of the time. There are also times when I'm not moving that I feel little to no pain. The quantity and quality of sleep has improved which I think is helping everything else. What about swelling? Left side seems approx 10-20% larger than before the procedure, right

side approx 30-50% depending on time of day. What's kind of weird is that the left side stays the same size but the right side will grow or shrink depending on day and time.

I'm rarely using pain pills anymore and instead have cranked up the vitamins now that I'm off antibiotics. I take a strong multiple, saw palmetto and a GNC cleansing formula (psyllium husks, acidopholus, etc) each day to keep everything else happy. I'm going to give things some more time and then make a judgment call on whether to have humpty dumpty put back together again. Aside from what appears to be a logical scenario of "fixing the fix", all the other surgeries I've researched seem barbaric, risky and often do not help. My hope is that the healing and pain abatement continue to the point where it's acceptable again and I don't even have to consider surgical options, hopefully in a few more weeks.

At my wife's request I've put together a numeric pain scale so she knows where I'm at on any given day and how best to deal with me.

Pain Scale

- 1-3** mild to mild+ discomfort, annoying but not debilitating except for sports and other exertion. I've lived with this type of pain most of my life.
- 4** medium discomfort with some pain or intense ache part or much of the time
- 5** medium+ discomfort, enough pain to force me to start paring down the day's schedule. Can still focus on work for half days, full days usually turn into a "6" if I keep pushing it. Advil will hold it at bay or bring it back down to a 4 sometimes.
- 6** high discomfort, medium pain most or all of the time. Walking is done selectively, most of the time is spent lying down or standing still. Bring on the Vicodins. Hard to stay focused on work (from the pain and/or Vicodin), even at the home office
- 7** medium to medium + pain all the time. Plan on moving as little as possible, with television the primary activity.
- 8** Medium-high pain all the time and some vomiting. Like #7 but too much pain to stay focused on TV. Tylox is usually taken at this level but at level 8 and up painkillers just displace some of the pain but it's definitely still there.
- 9** Constantly high pain and vomiting, regardless of movement or lack thereof. Just shoot me please.
- 10** Soul-crushing pain and discomfort. This was experienced only once, during the Vasectomy procedure itself.

To put things in perspective, here's the pain ranges for the last 6 weeks. Keep in mind these are based on actual highs and lows and not averages.

Week 1	8-9
Week 2	8-9
Week 3	7-8
Week 4	6-9
Week 5	5-8
Week 6	3-8

8 Weeks

I went to a highly recommended acupuncturist twice during Week 7 and the first visit took about an hour, with 16 or so needles inserted in various parts of the ear lobes, wrist, forehead, stomach, and feet. I felt just the slightest pain on a few of the insertions but that quickly faded. The Dr. also gave me a bottle of Traumeel, an herbal anti-inflammatory.

Now here's the strange part. As soon as the needles were in I felt some weirdness down below. Tried ignoring it, thinking it might have been in my head but it became quite distinct and persistent. The level of pain and discomfort I usually feel fluctuates throughout the day very slowly. In this case subtle waves of alternating types and volumes of discomfort passed over the testes for about 10 minutes and then slowly subsided. It was not an enjoyable sensation, yet not intense or unbearable either.

For the next few hours I didn't notice a difference (if anything I felt worse), but the following two days were on the lower end of the pain scale. Unfortunately by the third day I was almost as bad as ever. Interestingly the pain was composed 100% of "ache and tender" compared to "sharp, stabbing" pain.

The day after that I was scheduled for more acupuncture but this time the treatment was far more aggressive. The Dr. apparently took me as a personal challenge. She said outright I was one of the more "intense" cases she had seen and asked my permission to put needles in sensitive places (not where you're thinking – that was spared). Some did hurt quite a bit, especially on the fleshy part of the inside of my thumb but I didn't care as long as it had even a small chance of helping. Altogether I counted 30 needles and the ones in my stomach appeared to go the deepest. After an average evening I awoke the next day feeling the best I had thus far and have had 3 similarly good days since. Not sure whether the acupuncture really has had an impact or it's just a coincidence but there are also some physical improvements including a reduction in swelling, less "hang" on the right side and closer to normal skin tone.

Theory: I've had plenty of time to think about the root cause of this and currently believe it's comprised of two components.

1) My body is having a major problem adjusting to the new plumbing configuration and resulting backpressure. This could be the cause of the ongoing epididymal pain but doesn't explain the horrible experience I had during the procedure or the resulting hematoma. After 9000 vasectomies I'll give the doctor who did it the benefit of the doubt (for now) that nothing went awry with the procedure itself.

2) My vas deferens (especially the right one) may be shorter than the average guy's. That would explain the intense "piano wire pull" I felt during the operation despite a local anesthetic. It would also explain the ongoing pain not specifically in the epididymus, but closer to the other section of each vas and especially on the right side because the ends of the vas may have torn when pulled out of the scrotum (he used the NSV technique). By the time both vas were cut, cauterized, clipped and released there would have been considerable rupturing on all ends due to the lack of vas "slack".

Pain scale:

Week 7 3-7

Week 8 2-7

10 Weeks

Since the last update I've gone through two complete swelling/abatement cycles. As usual the swelling was mostly on the right side while the left was more black and blue and painful. I'm becoming more convinced that the initial hematoma was a sign of substantial rupturing and would explain why the right side of the scrotum fills with fluid (and nearly fills both sides sometimes!). Also, since the vasectomy I'd estimate there's a 30-40% reduction in the average ejaculate volume (which most doctors will tell you is not possible).

This time at peak swelling I purposefully manipulated the epididymus on both sides and confirmed that the right side, while twice as swollen as the left, was far less sensitive to the touch. I can also say that there was no difference in pain after the manipulation. This seems to contrast heavily with some people in similar situations I've spoken to, who's pain goes through the roof after anything touches them there. I even pushed myself to throw on a supporter and mow the lawn which while uncomfortable didn't affect the pain either way afterwards. It's almost as if the increased scrotal fluid forms a temporary layer of shock absorption. Weird.

These observations plus what I read in an excellent report "Testicular Pain Following Vasectomy: A Review of Postvasectomy Pain Syndrome"¹ lead me to believe the left side is in a classic struggle to get its close-ended vasectomy epididymal absorption under control (say that 3 times fast ;-). The right side, however, might be acting more like an open ended vasectomy due to early and substantial epididymal rupturing that is allowing

¹ Testicular Pain Following Vasectomy: A Review of Postvasectomy Pain Syndrome by Cory G. Christensen and Jay I. Sandlow, The University of Iowa Department of Urology, Iowa City, Iowa

sperm to leak out. What's a bit strange is that the initial granulomas are now almost gone and the tissue in that area seems in pretty good shape. From what I understand granulomas should almost always accompany sperm leakage(?)

Also had 3 more acupuncture sessions this past week and can say there's been a major reduction in the more intense pain (but not swelling or ache) since I started a few weeks back. While I believe it's helping there's absolutely no way to know for sure. Comparison with an identical control group just isn't possible and at 8-9 weeks out I may very well have been due for some more healing and the two happened to coincide.

At the last two sessions she hooked up some low-voltage wires to a few of the needles. I could actually feel the electricity traveling across the skin from my thighs to my stomach. While none was felt in the groin (thank goodness!) I did feel a noticeable improvement in the day's discomfort immediately afterwards and then had two decent days, but then the next day both testicles were in so much pain I had to stay home from work and take painkillers. The following day it was back to being manageable again. What a roller coaster ride.

WARNING – PAINFUL ANECDOTE:

OK, I actually went back and added this section almost a year later at my wife's insistence. At the time it happened I didn't even want to talk about it, let alone write it down. Here goes:

My 4 year old had her birthday party at Chuck E. Cheese and I was already having a tough day pain-wise. About halfway through the party I turn around and this little boy comes running over, almost out of nowhere and punches me in the worst possible spot. I crumple to the floor, more in disbelief and shock than anything else. After about 5 minutes I still can't stand and the kid's mom is freaking out. I try explaining between deep breaths I'm in rough shape down there to begin with, which just adds to her level of mortification. She leaves a few seconds later, dragging her screaming and crying kid with her. My wife helps me up and asks what I could have possibly said or done to incite such a reaction, and the answer of course is absolutely nothing except being in the wrong place at the wrong time. I spend the rest of the party with an icepack lying down in the car contemplating life, the universe and who exactly I had pissed off for my luck to sink this far. A few days later the pain subsided to its usual level. I never did figure out why the kid did that, although a few months later my daughter came home and said that Jason had fallen off the monkey bars and broken his arm – the same one I was hit with. How's that for karma?

Pain scale:

Week 9	2-7
Week 10	2-6

12 Weeks

Over the last few weeks the cycle has changed quite a bit. The intense pains are gone and I'm left with varying levels of ache. At this point there no longer seems to be a pattern for when things are better or worse, it can vary every few hours or stay the same for a day or so. Sometimes it's bad enough to keep me home from work but more often than not I'm able to stick to a normal schedule. Aside from ache I still experience tugging and pinching sensations up my abdomen a good amount of time still. Sex usually makes things a bit worse for a couple of hours but then I go back to the way I was beforehand (pardon the pun), with no apparent mid or long term affect either way. Intensity is about the same as pre-vas but volume and distance noticeably less. Still wearing a scrotal support that helps tremendously when I'm out and about. Sitting is still a challenge but I'm OK at work with a chair that leans way back.

Pain scale:

Week 11	2-5
Week 12	1-4

4 Months

There's been slight improvement overall this past month, the sharp pains are now completely gone and I'm left with alternating soreness, tenderness and ache which seems to be pretty random and varies in intensity. Most days are bearable if I'm careful (the slightest touch in the wrong place hurts) and other days can be annoyingly discomforting. I've finally been able to start exercising again which is really helping and I'm working on getting a hand-powered bike so I can make use of the great local trails here. Air travel still requires pain killers, especially on long flights but Vicodin seems to keep it under control.

New insurance kicks in July 1st and I definitely haven't ruled out a reversal later this year if the improvement doesn't continue. I still remember what it was like to be nearly pain-free and refuse to accept the current level as status quo going forward.

Pain scale:

Month 4	1-4
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6 Months

I just hit the 6 month mark post-vas and went to see a PVP specialist about options. After relating my history he did an exam and pretty much concurred on the remaining options for getting pain-free. I can continue as-is and hope that the pain eventually subsides <or> go for a reversal and hope that I'm in the 60-80% that get relief. I had ruled out converting to an open-ended vas for a number of reasons and basically feel it's worth

being fertile again if there's a chance I can lead a normal life. We BOTH ruled out removing anything else.

He was the first doctor I talked to who admitted 3-5% of men who get a vas will have some type of pain. He also said he's seen a correlation between any complexity or difficulty the original Doc ran into during the vas and potential long term complications.

I'm now working on lowering the cost of reversal through insurance but will find a way to cover it either way. Life is just too short. In the meantime he suggested testosterone therapy to see if I get relief and to rule out nerve damage before going under the knife. I'm especially concerned about side effects, even short term (weight loss, mood swings, etc). He did a blood test for PSA, etc and gave me a prescription for the patch (Androgel 5mg) but I want to do some more research before going ahead.

Side note: since the operation back in February I haven't had a single good nights sleep. The problem is that for the past 35 years or so I've slept exclusively on my stomach, and since even the slightest pressure is uncomfortable now so I can't lie that way anymore. As a result I'd say I average about 4 hours of sleep a night on my back or side.

Last week I went online and bought a \$100 fold-up guest bed and mattress. In the middle of the mattress I cut open a circle about 8" in diameter and then cut out the springs directly underneath. The final step was taping up any sharp edges and lining with cloth.

How did it work? Well, I tried it last night (lying on my stomach of course) and while it took a little bit of getting use to, I slept more soundly than I had in months.

I know the whole thing probably sounds a bit extreme, but I really couldn't take it anymore. Tonight I'm thinking of lining the bottom with a cold pack and am giddy with anticipation at the thought.

Pain Scale

Month 5 & 6 1-5

7 Months

After 2 weeks on Testosterone therapy I've decided to stop because of some side effects. The really good news though is that for the last few days I've seen a huge improvement in ache and discomfort, and can honestly say yesterday was the first day I didn't think about pain at all in the last 6 months! There is also some slight but noticeable (good) shrinking that has taken place which I'm guessing is taking pressure off the parts that were hurting the most. The tenderness when touched is still there but significantly reduced.

The reason I'm stopping is because for the past week I've become increasingly anxious, especially at the office. I've spent the past 10 years working stressful jobs with no problem but even minor things (like calling a satisfied client) will now trigger intense

feelings of anxiety and dread. I didn't sleep at all last night and it took all my willpower to make it into the office today. With some big presentations coming up over the next few weeks I just can't take a chance on being in this mode any longer.

Other, more minor side effects include acne and aggressiveness (like road rage), and I also noticed a bizarre effect it's had on my wife. Apparently some of the T can either rub off or be transferred via body fluids because she's been so revved up the past week it's amazing. This is obviously a good side effect from my perspective (nearly pain free sex every night the past few days!!!!) but I'm sure it's not good long term and is another reason I believe it's prudent to stop the T. This is of course all speculation but the T package insert did say partners can be affected and I'm assuming this is what they meant.

So, I'll see how things progress over the next couple of weeks. If the pain comes back slowly I feel confident that a reversal is the right way to go.

One other important point to mention: I spoke to the original uro a few weeks back who did the vas and told him about the T therapy. He hadn't heard about it before but was intrigued and said he would be interested to see how my open-ended vasectomy would be affected. What?!?!?!?! Open ended?!?!?! I had assumed all along he did the standard NSV *closed* procedure (I know - I really should have asked before and/or afterwards and he should have made it clear at some point when I was having pain) and was totally blown away by this info. Good thing I didn't go to another doctor to get an open ended conversion, imagine his surprise and my disappointment when we found them already open! I went back through my notes and some things are making more sense now. It probably explains why I'm not suffering the intense, stabbing epididymal pains that many with a closed-ended vas have described. Why my body can't get the absorption under control is still a mystery. I know the immunological response isn't supposed to kick in right away but maybe I had already developed that response from the original op for cyst removal 15 years ago?

With all that said I would still recommend T therapy as a diagnostic tool for people who have tried everything else, just beware of some possible side effects.

9 Months – November 13th “All the king’s horses and all the king’s men...”

November 13th, 2004:

It's been 24 hours since I went in for my reversal and I'm just chillin' (every 20 minutes on/off cycles) at a hotel in northern Atlanta. The operation was done under general anesthesia and took 2 hours. The staff and facilities were exceptional and my concerns and questions addressed promptly and taken seriously. I'm still battling United Healthcare to cover it but had decided not to delay the op and will get a refund if/when the insurance eventually comes through. Total cost ? \$12K for everything. I knew I'd eventually find a use for all those credit cards I had paid off.

So far the pain is manageable, especially compared to what I went through with the vasectomy itself which was twice as bad and lasted for months. The type of pain is also different than before, more swelling and soreness and so far none of the dreaded ache. The gauze needs to stay on for 48 hours but I took a peak and it looks pretty scary down there with lots of stitches. Without going into too much detail picture Frankenstein as a baseball AFTER the big game ;-)

I'm seeing the doc one more time before heading home on Monday but he called last night and reiterated that everything went well on his end. He also mentioned there was a lot of scar tissue removed on both sides that may have been contributing to the problem, and my plumbing is now successfully restored to its original pre-vas state. Now I just have to wait and see where the pain winds up in a few weeks. I'm prepared to live with the results whether good or bad.

November 16th, 2004: 4 Days Post Reversal

It's been a tough ride the last couple of few days but the swelling is finally starting to go down and I've noticed that the pain is comprised almost exclusively of soreness and not ache or sharp stabbing pains. I met with the Doctor this AM to make sure I was up for the 8 hour drive home (wife driving of course) and for some more detail on what he found. In addition to the scar tissue that had been removed I had a fair amount of torsion on both sides. This meant that any time there was swelling all sorts of things were under pressure including the nerves. While the torsion damage was obviously from my vasectomy back in February, I'll never know if something went wrong during the procedure itself or if for some reason I was just predisposed to things getting wrapped up like that when the vas was pulled out using the no scalpel technique. In hindsight I'm finally starting to understand why the pain was so intense and lasted so long, especially with the recent knowledge that the procedure was open ended. The delicate structures got twisted up, there was prolific bleeding and to add insult to injury (literally) millions of sperm were flooding the site. Even after 9 months my body never did get used to absorbing them, as evidenced by the T therapy results a few months back.

Visually the scrotum is every shade of blue and purple you can imagine and about 3 times normal size. There are 1" incisions on each side with dissolving stitches and so far no sign of infection.

As brutal as this whole affair has been, I must say that my wife and four-year-old daughter have been nothing short of amazing - both emotionally and logistically - and I am so fortunate to have them in my life. At the exam this morning Alexis told the Doctor "Thanks for fixing my Daddy". I hope it's true.

November 27th, 2004 - 2 Weeks Post Reversal

There's been quite a bit of improvement this weekend and despite the amount of healing left to go I'm already enjoying life again. The overall pain level is down about 60% from before the reversal (and most importantly doesn't randomly fluctuate anymore!) and

things seems to hurt only when moved or touched. I believe that's because there's no longer any sperm leakage causing endless swelling cycles. Instead what pain remains is from the trauma incurred during the reversal itself and/or my original cyst(s) which unfortunately have started hurting a bit more since the op, but aren't show stoppers by any means. I would guess this is because the epididymus has become re-pressurized causing the cysts to inflate again like tires with a bad radial. Hopefully things will wind up no worse than before the vasectomy and I'll be able to live with them as I have in the past, or at some point maybe consider additional surgery (yeah right!) down the road. At this rate I hope to be driving and walking normally by the end of the week and back to work next Monday.

December 2nd, 2004 – 3 Weeks Post Reversal

3 weeks post reversal and doing great. Still quite sore but the previous "evil" pain and ache from the original vas hasn't returned yet and I'm back at work this week in full force. The original cyst pain is noticeable once again but no worse than before.

Most of the soreness is limited to where the stitches are and continues just below the surface but doesn't seem to extend very deep. Sitting and walking are uncomfortable but if I stand still or lie down just right there is no pain whatsoever!!! The scar tissue removal and fixing of the torsion previously mentioned must have been pretty intense, as some internal parts are still hard and/or swollen and I guess I have a long way to go to loosen up to where both sides hang down normally again. Hot showers and baths are no longer a form of torture and actually feel good again which I take as an excellent sign. I'm still wearing a suspensory which helps a lot - especially when sitting.

What's amazing is how scary it still looks - plenty of fading black and blue, yellow, and other colors - but I consider that a sign of more healing (and hopefully an accompanying reduction in soreness) to come over the next few weeks and months. Even if it stays at this level it was definitely worth the time, money, pain and effort to get fixed. My wife and everyone else have noticed a huge change in my demeanor and it no longer feels like I'm dragging a boat anchor throughout the day. Also finally starting to sleep through the night again, which is making a huge difference.

Took it out for a test drive and no problems to report there. Not happy to be right back where I started regarding birth control but that's OK in light of everything else. I'll miss doing it au natural but I guess some things just aren't meant to be.

One other comment: I received the post-op report from the surgeon's office and was amazed to find out that both testicles were temporarily removed during the reversal. YOW! Good thing I pre-paid ;-)

Final analysis and comments January 10, 2005 – 2 months post reversal

This is my last entry unless things change dramatically in the coming months. I've still got a lot of healing to go but the worst is in the rear view mirror. Most of the time I feel

no major pain, just some lingering soreness and discomfort at the surgery sites. Hopefully even that will fade slowly over time.

I've made some friends online who have been through similar things and are still in pain and have been so for years with no end in sight, so I consider myself extremely fortunate. While not an expert by any means I unfortunately am experienced now in the little known area of PVP (post vasectomy pain) and offer a final set of conclusions and advice below. Thanks for reading all the way though.

1) I think it should be standard procedure for some type of imaging device to be used before and/or during a vasectomy to completely map out the area. The NSV vasectomy technique is wonderful in reducing chances of infection but in my case suspect much suffering (perhaps all?) could have been prevented with the older but less "blind" method where perhaps the problem could have been seen before damage was done.

I really think that one day a set of pre-vas diagnostics will go a long way in preventing these situations and is sorely lacking now because of the technology or maybe by most doctor's lack of motivation to use it (hey this stuff is pretty rare, right?). I'd also like to see more attention given to sperm count and sperm antibodies and their correlation with problems afterwards.

2) I wonder if things would be different if my lower vas ends were closed and not left open. Would I have suffered epididymal pressure pains as some have reported, or rather might my recovery have been easier because no sperm could have leaked into the traumatized vasectomy site to aggravate the nerve entrapment? In my particular case each set of ends (containing a closed end and an open end) were held in parallel together by a clip so they didn't wander, which I think caused the cycles of swelling and pain. Apparently sperm leakage was happening within or right next to the traumatized site.

Conversely, would I have had any problem with the open ended procedure itself if none of the nerves had gotten trapped in the first place? I'll always wonder if my response to the resulting sperm leakage of the open ended procedure would have been tolerated OK if not for the trauma inflicted when the vas were yanked out. Things may have been very different, maybe with just a couple of annoying granulomas or perhaps no pain at all.

3) Get the best doctor you can. Always.

4) Patience, patience, and more patience. The key to retaining one's sanity is to muster enough patience to make it through each day while knowing that the next day might be just as bad or worse and a solution – if any – remains far away. Getting your life back is worth working and waiting for.

5) Am I against vasectomies? No, even after everything that's happened. While you wouldn't catch me in a million years doing it again (or any voluntary surgery for that matter) I understand that most men who get one have no problems whatsoever and are back to their normal life in a few days. Then again if you're one of the few unlucky ones

like me then the odds become meaningless and life is hell. Every action involves risk. Take the time to understand what those risks are and then make an informed decision.

I can be reached at adam@jbcc.com if you have any questions.

And be well.

-Adam