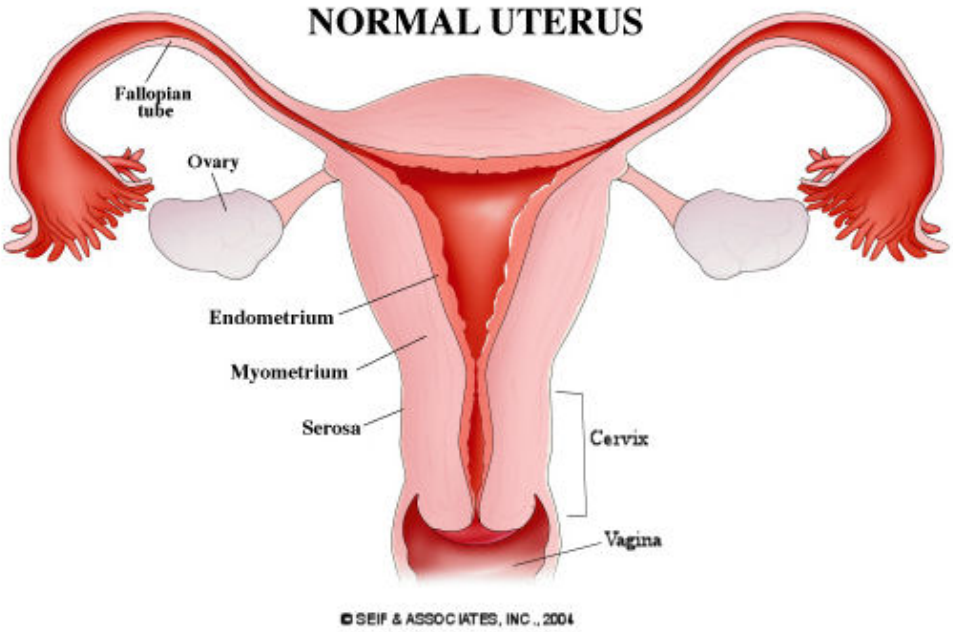
Postpartum Tubal Ligation (PPTL)

A postpartum tubal ligation is when the fallopian tubes are tied after a pregnancy. The fallopian tubes carry the eggs from the ovary to the womb (*uterus*). A PPTL procedure is done to permanently prevent pregnancy (*sterilization*). Although this procedure may be reversed, it should be considered **permanent** and **irreversible**. This means they cannot be repaired. You should consider that **you will never have children again**.

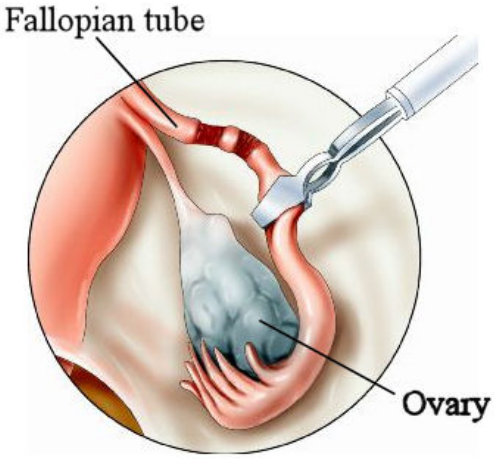


This decision should be thought over carefully and discussed with your partner. Discuss it while you are pregnant in order to make a more sound and intelligent decision, rather than waiting until the baby is born. It may be good to wait until a day or two after the birth to make sure everything is all right with the baby. You must be absolutely sure you do not want another pregnancy. PPTL should be delayed if any medical problems develop during labor and delivery with the mother or the baby.

PROCEDURE

The PPTL is a surgical procedure. This operation can be safely performed right after delivery or the day after delivery.

- If it is done following a vaginal delivery, it can be done through a small cut (*incision*) just beneath the belly button. A medicine will be used that numbs the area or puts you to sleep (*anesthetic*).
- If a caesarean section is performed, the decision on whether to have a tubal ligation is usually made before the surgery. This is so the tubal ligation may be done at the same time, after delivery of the baby.
- The fallopian tubes are tied off with two stitches (*sutures*).
- A small piece of the tube is removed and then looked at under a microscope to make sure it is the tube.



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Different procedures are available for performing the operation on the tubes. Your surgeon will discuss the pros and cons for PPTL. A PPTL does not require a longer hospital stay.

COMPLICATIONS

- Infection. A germ starts growing in the wound. This can usually be treated with medications that kill germs (*antibiotics*).
- Fever.
- Bleeding is a complication of almost all surgeries. However, it is not common following this surgery.
- Pregnancy. This may happen when the body repairs itself and the tubes or one of the tubes is again able to transport an egg to the uterus. This may also occur as the result of a surgical failure. All surgeries, regardless of how perfectly they are done, are not always successful with perfect results.

- Tubal pregnancy. A tubal pregnancy may occur following a tubal ligation when the tube has repaired enough to transport an egg. Because the tube has been damaged by surgery, it is more likely that the fertilized egg can implant in the tube. A tubal pregnancy can be life threatening.
- Injury to surrounding organs and blood vessels.
- There is an increase incidence of hysterectomy later in life. The reason is unknown.
- **Regret is a late complication.** You may wish to carry another pregnancy again. Chances of this can be lessened by careful decision making before the procedure. All possibilities should be thought of. This includes the things you do not like to think about such as divorce, loss of your spouse, death or loss of your children.

Women who regret having a tubal ligation and wish to become pregnant again have a couple of choices that include:

- Reversing the tubal ligation, untying and connecting the tubes again. However:
  - The procedure is expensive.
  - There is a higher risk of a tubal pregnancy.
  - It is not always successful.
- In vitro fertilization. However, it is:
  - Expensive.
  - Very complicated and demanding on the patient.
  - Not always successful.

OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER

- PPTL does not protect against sexually transmitted diseases.
- There is a lower incidence of ovarian cancer.
- There is no change in your sex drive or interest in sex.
- A tubal ligation does not cause problems with your menstrual periods.
- A tubal ligation in women has more problems and risks than a vasectomy in men.

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