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## Urged by their wives, 3 longtime friends get vasectomies on same day

*For men choosing vasectomies, spring is a popular time to recover watching the NCAA national championship basketball tourney*

LOS ANGELES – Three Los Angeles-area men had shared a lot of memorable moments in their decades-long friendships. But going to the doctor for a vasectomy together was an experience they never expected to have.

Paul Diaz, Basilio Santangelo and John Lambrechts – each married with two children – had decided with their wives that they didn't want to continue growing their families. After a pregnancy scare, Paul and his wife, Lisa, agreed that they were happy with their two healthy, active girls, and Lisa broached the topic of a vasectomy.

That discussion got things rolling, but there was a problem.

"Like most men," says Diaz, "I don't like going to the doctor. I don't like going to the dentist. I don't like going to any of those things. So, it's hard for me to just volunteer."

To address her husband's reluctance, Lisa chatted with two of her friends, the wives of Santangelo and Lambrechts. Together, they hatched an idea.

"We thought, why don't we get our husbands together, make their appointments the same day, one right after the other, so they can have the procedure and recuperate all at the same time?" she says. "They say there's strength in numbers. And it actually made it a lot easier for them to kind of jump into this together."

Paul and his friends were game, and they found a doctor who was ready to help.

"Men don't really talk about health concerns together, let alone say something as intimate as 'Hey, I'm going to get a vasectomy, want to come along?'," said [Dr. Jesse Mills](#), a urologist and director of The Men's Clinic at UCLA. "But this was the perfect situation."

Springtime is one time of year when men do seem more focused on the topic of birth control. Each year there are stories about men who undergo vasectomies in March so they can spend several days recuperating on the couch while watching college basketball tournament games.

“We often talk about women’s health and there is a great deal of attention that focuses on reproductive issues,” said Mills. “But guys are part of that equation, too, and this time of year we see an uptick in men being more of a part of that discussion.”

Though vasectomies are widely considered the most reliable and cost-effective of any form of birth control for either men or women, only about [one in 10](#) eligible men in the U.S. have the procedure, according to a 2015 report from the United Nations.

That’s roughly half the rate of vasectomies as men in Canada and England, for example.

Vasectomies are outpatient procedures that typically take less than 30 minutes and are performed under local anesthesia, usually in a doctor’s office. Recovery times seem perfectly suited for spending time on the couch to watch the NCAA college basketball tournament. Doctors recommend rest the day after the procedure and depending on the patient’s occupation, he may need two to three days of recovery before returning to work.

Sterilization surgery for women, known as tubal ligation, requires women to undergo general anesthesia. It is a more invasive surgery that is performed at a hospital or surgical center and often requires an overnight stay.

Recovery times are also much longer for women who get tubal ligation and the failure rate is higher compared to vasectomies. According to the CDC, one in every two hundred tubal ligations [fail](#), leading to unexpected pregnancies within a year, more than three times the rate as vasectomies.

“Given all the advantage to vasectomies, it’s remarkable that more couples don’t consider that option,” said Mills. “It’s an option that really deserves more consideration.”

While most men don’t go with a buddy to get a vasectomy—let alone get a group of three guys together—Mills says more men are teaming up. Diaz, Santangelo and Lambrechts planned their procedures around a weekend of football playoff games so they could relax, recuperate on the couch watching TV, and share their experiences on social media.

During March, many men choose to do the same in order to recuperate while watching the NCAA basketball tournament.

The three Los Angeles men decided to have the procedures together to ease the stress and provide support for one another. They also wanted to send a message to other men that vasectomies are nothing to hide.

“We not only decided to do it, we decided to be very open about it,” said Diaz. “I don’t think it’s something to be ashamed of. On the contrary, I think by choosing to do this, you’re being responsible.”

When men visit his clinic, Mills says he typically uses the opportunity to discuss other health concerns with patients.

“Men are notoriously bad when it comes to going to the doctor, so I use the vasectomy appointment as a platform to open a dialogue about other things they should be aware of,” he said.

Most vasectomies are performed on men in their 30s, 40s and 50s, around the same time that risks for other health conditions tend to rise.

“They’re hitting a time in their lives when they need to start monitoring their risks for things like cardiovascular disease, stroke or cancer,” said Mills. “So not only do I see them for the procedure they came in for, but I spend some time with them to figure out if they’re meeting all of those men’s health milestones.”

Diaz, Lambrechts, and Santangelo agree that men are not always eager to chat about health concerns, but they are glad they did.

“The three of us are pretty close, and after discussing it, decided we’d take one for the team,” says Lambrechts.

Adds Santangelo; “Our wives already went through so much giving birth, we figured this is an easier option for us. I think a lot more men should talk about these things and, if it helps, go together to them them done.”

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