

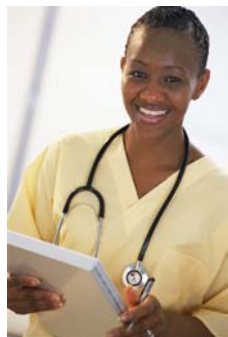
Microscopic Tubal Reversals – What you Need to Know

By Joel G. Brasch, M.D.

Making your decision – Personal decisions, such as the decision to undergo surgical reversal of a prior tubal ligation, are complex. While individuals will each have their personal reasons, accumulated data would suggest that the most common reason a woman chooses to undergo a reversal is re-marriage to a new spouse. Other less common reasons include loss of a child, change in financial situation, or simply “we want more children”.

Your first step – One should locate a competent specialist. You should inquire as to the number of procedures performed, success rates, and complication rates. The surgical procedure itself, while rather minor for the patient, is technically demanding for the surgeon. Much skill and experience is required. Your chosen surgeon should routinely be performing the procedure in order to maintain his/her skills in microscopic surgery. With the explosion of the sub-specialty of infertility and reproductive endocrinology, many accomplished surgeons practice in this area of medicine. Many other physicians (gynecologists, general surgeons) have extensive experience and training in microscopic surgery on the female reproductive tract. Ultimately, the skill and experience of your surgeon are more important than the actual field of medicine in which he/she practices.

Your second step – Once you have chosen your physician, both husband and wife should undergo testing. This should include thorough evaluation in order to determine your ability to conceive following surgery. Appropriate tests might include some or all of the following: semen analysis, ovulation tests and tests for ovarian reserve (the menopause test). Your physician might review the operative report from your original tubal ligation. Often times we are able to locate the pathology report, which states the length of tube that was removed. Ultimately, direct visualization of your tubes will determine if a reversal is possible. One method utilized to directly visualize your tubes is laparoscopy (belly button surgery). This may be performed the same day of your reversal or in the weeks proceeding.



Your actual surgery – Typically performed in the hospital, you will undergo a “mini-laparotomy”. An incision, approximately 6 inches, will be made above your pubic hairline. This is often referred to as a “bikini incision”. You will probably spend a day or two in the hospital, although some patients may be sent home the same day of surgery. Your physician will spend several hours reconnecting

your tubes. Extremely small threads are used. Quite likely, the threads are invisible to the unassisted human eye. Your surgeon will utilize surgical microscopes. Recently, some surgeons are performing the procedure through the laparoscope. Advantages include smaller incisions, shortened hospital stay, and possible reduced cost. Disadvantages include the utilization of larger threads, uncertain success rates, and possible higher complications rates. You should discuss this option with your physician. As with most surgical procedures, it is prudent to undergo the procedure with which your physician is most comfortable.

***“the skill
And
experience
of your
surgeon
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important”***

Success rates – Pregnancy rates are difficult to calculate in that a multitude of other variables may interfere with conception or pregnancy. Tube patency rates (open tubes) are simpler to understand. Significant variables include method of original surgical procedure, length of tube remaining, and skill of surgeon. In the worst scenario you will not be considered a candidate for a reversal because success rates would be too low. In the best of scenarios patency rates could exceed 90%. Consult your physician for

details.

Cost of procedure – Costs will vary significantly depending on your surgeon, hospital, type of procedure and insurance coverage. You should expect to pay \$3,000- \$6,000 to your fertility center exclusive of hospital and anesthesia costs. Given the significant financial commitment, center-to-center cost differences are of minimal importance. The skill and experience of your surgeon is paramount importance. You should ask, and have clearly presented to you, financial information prior to undergoing any procedures.

Available alternatives – Alternatives to reversal of tubal ligation include adoption and test tube baby (IVF). There are multiple medical and financial considerations. Your chosen fertility center should assist you financially and psychologically through the process.

In closing –The process of tubal ligation reversal is more involved than most couples realize. While we certainly hope that you choose our center, Advanced Reproductive Health Centers, LTD, there are many competent physicians and centers. At a minimum, you should expect (1) details about the training, skill. And experience of your chosen surgeon, (2) complete information on success rates and potential complications, and (3) financial and psychological counseling opportunities. This information should be presented in an easily understood format prior to your undergoing surgery. For appointments and further assistance on tubal reversals, please call **866-IVF-CHGO**.