

Undergoing a Delicate Surgery to Become a Father Again

by Yvette M. Manard, MPH

When you read a headline about a “miracle” baby, it’s typically about a woman overcoming infertility and giving birth. But for men, the circumstances are reversed, as approximately 40,000 men each year change their minds and decide to have their vasectomy reversed. This was the case for Troy, aged 45, who wanted to become a father again.

In 2002, Troy, a business owner and father of four children, felt that his family was complete and he had a vasectomy. However, like 5% of United States’ men who undergo a vasectomy, Troy’s life circumstances changed. He fell in love, remarried and as the years passed, Troy and his wife, Jessica, wanted to have a baby. They began their research to explore options to restore Troy’s fertility. Their Internet research gave them a basic understanding of the different procedures and the success rates, ranging from vasectomy reversal to assisted reproductive technologies like IVF (In Vitro Fertilization). “After looking at the statistics, I was concerned that my vasectomy reversal might not be successful because 7 years had passed, and the odds seemed against me that I would be able to father a child again,” Troy explains.

While the couple was doing their Internet research, Troy and Jessica narrowed down the list of urologists they wanted to consult with who specialize in vasectomy reversal. In October, 2009, the couple selected Dr. Robert Pugach, Medical Director of *Pacific Coast Urology Medical Center*, and scheduled a consultation. Even though Troy and Jessica live in Lancaster they didn’t mind the long drive to Dr. Pugach’s Los Alamitos office.

While a vasectomy reversal seems to be a rather straightforward procedure, because it just requires suturing the ends of the vas deferens back together again, it’s far more complex than that. As Dr. Pugach says, “A vasectomy reversal isn’t as simple as it sounds.” The procedure is a 3 to 4 hour delicate surgical procedure that uses precise microsurgical techniques with a special operating room microscope. During the operation, the urologic surgeon has to carefully stitch together the cut ends of a patient’s vas deferens. “An exact alignment is needed for a successful operation,” says Dr. Pugach. “This is difficult because the inside of the vas deferens is very tiny – just one-third of a millimeter in diameter. The best way to envision this is to think of putting the ends of 2 paper clips together. In that tiny area, up to 24 stitches are required on each side to obtain the most precise alignment possible.”

After discussing it over, Troy and Jessica decided they wanted to try. “We understood that there is no guarantee in life, but we very much wanted to have a baby,” says Troy. In November of 2009, Troy underwent the procedure at a local community hospital. “I was discharged home the same day with minimal pain and advised to take it easy for 72 hours,” continues Troy.

After six months had passed, Troy and Jessica returned to Dr. Pugach for a follow-up semen analysis and were thrilled to be given the good news that Troy's sperm count was good. The couple didn't have to wait long as Jessica's pregnancy test was positive. Their miracle baby, Jillian, was born January 4, 2011. "Bringing Jillian home to meet her four siblings, aged 18 to 10 years, was the best New Year's gift we could ask for," says Jessica.

But wait! The story doesn't end here. With their family now complete, Troy has once again opted for a vasectomy. This time, Dr. Pugach will be performing a No Needle, No Scalpel vasectomy. Unlike a vasectomy reversal, the vasectomy will only take 15 minutes while Troy watches a television mounted on the ceiling and surfs through his favorite channels. Nothing sharp is used for numbing – a jet spray of Novocain numbs the area instantly and no stitches are required! Dr. Pugach is one of a select group of urologists who perform this remarkable procedure.

Call, 888.735.4336, to schedule a consultation with Dr. Robert Pugach.