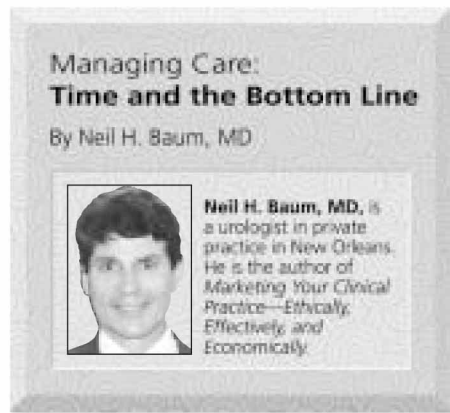


# Urology Times

Practice  
Management

## Reach out with a procedure-specific site

Newer Web sites help urologists market vasectomy, other elective surgeries



About 42% of physicians currently work in practices that have a Website. Patients who connect with their physicians through the Internet comment on the ability to feel more connected to the practice and more in control of their care.

Besides using Web-based technology to help manage your practice more cost effectively, this technology can also help physicians connect with new patients. Public trust in health care information on the Internet remains high, according to a 2001 Harris Interactive Internet survey. In fact, some 100 million adults seek online medical information every month, the survey found.

Many Internet-savvy consumers are now turning to online sources for information on specific procedures including two urologic procedures—vasectomy and vasectomy reversal. Patients interested in these and other elective procedures offer a

unique opportunity for urologists. This high-quality patient base essentially knows what it wants, is decision-ready, offers excellent potential for patient retention, and is ready to pay for procedures that may not be covered by their insurance plans.

### Increase visibility

Procedure-specific Web sites offer urologists a relatively new avenue to reach such patients. These sites not only help connect patients with procedure-specific information but also provide physicians with an easy, efficient, and cost-effective way to increase visibility in a widely viewed consumer medium that reaches a large, pre-qualified audience. While many urologists continue to rely on various types of advertising, this vehicle does not offer any depth of information on you, your practice, your procedures or financing information. General physician database listings may gen-

***Elective procedures are becoming a critical component of growth and revenue generation in today's managed care environment.***

erate more exposure for a physician's practice, but they are not specific to a given procedure. As a result, patients must jump or surf from other information resources to databases to find what they are seeking. In addition, physicians who are contacted through general physician database listings have no way of knowing whether the patient is financially qualified for elective-service procedures such as vasectomy reversal. A number of procedure-specific sites on the Internet are already in place. Common in plastic surgery and dermatology, such sites have also cropped up in urology and other medical specialties.

Among them:

- [www.vasectomyreversalspecialists.com](http://www.vasectomyreversalspecialists.com) provides general information about vasectomy reversals with a searchable directory of urologists who perform them.
- [www.vasectomy.com](http://www.vasectomy.com) offers comprehensive information on vasectomy and vasectomy reversal, along with a physician database and third-party financing options.
- [www.spine-health.com](http://www.spine-health.com) provides back and neck pain information, with health care provider resources, including orthopedic surgeons and physical therapists.
- [www.ienhance.com](http://www.ienhance.com) provides consumer information about elective procedures in plastic surgery, dermatology, facial surgery, cosmetic dentistry and vision. Reach out with a procedure-specific site. Newer Web sites help urologists market vasectomy, other elective surgeries

# Practice Management

## Comprehensive vasectomy data

In urology, one procedure-specific site that is particularly comprehensive is [www.vasectomy.com](http://www.vasectomy.com). As noted, vasectomy and vasectomy reversal provide a unique marketing opportunity for urologists. Some 500,000 vasectomies and an estimated 50,000 reversals are performed in the United States annually. The number of reversals is growing due to advancements in microsurgical techniques and the number of physicians performing the procedure. Growth in the number of vasectomies is fueled by the fact that it is cost effective and can be done easily in the office using the no-scalpel technique.

Established in 1999, [www.vasectomy.com](http://www.vasectomy.com) is an alliance of physicians which differs in many respects from many other medical sites. In my own practice, I have used this site to provide potential new patients with a resource that supplements the information that I would give them prior to their first office visit. It offers the following features:

- **Authoritative information.** The site includes nearly 100 informational pages, including feature and secondary articles based on common questions and concerns expressed by patients and site visitors.

- **Physician database.** Free access is provided to practices that professionally showcase the physician and practice in a highly credible editorial environment.

- **Third-party financing.** Patient financing includes a free, online application and pre-qualification for a third-party loan that enables patients to undergo elective surgical procedures using a line of credit.

One of the advantages of

[www.vasectomy.com](http://www.vasectomy.com) is the provision for patients to obtain financing for such procedures, particularly vasectomy reversals, which are usually not covered by insurance companies. The site can connect patients to a finance company's Web site, and the patient can register and be qualified within 1 hour.

Using one of the finance companies available, the physician submits a bill for his or her services on the day of the procedure and will receive reimbursement within 48 hours after the bill is submitted. The doctor is compensated for 95% of the usual and customary fee. If the doctor does not accept 95% of the fee, the patient can pay the 5% prior to surgery as a co-payment and then make monthly installments to the finance company. The annual interest rate for the patient is 15% to 20%.

A physician directory listing is free to urologists who become members of [www.vasectomy.com](http://www.vasectomy.com). The site also offers four different paid membership programs, and as I evaluate them, it is clear that membership can quickly pay for itself in increased patient revenue. Annual membership fees for enhanced, interactive listings range from \$600 for a basic interactive plan (including a directory listing with a link to the physician's Web page) to \$3,600 for a Premier Highlight Package, which includes a primary position on both vasectomy and reversal Web pages, an article text page, interactive profile presentation page, and directory information listing.

In summary, elective procedures are becoming a critical component of growth and revenue generation in today's managed care environment. The key to accessing this

The screenshot shows the homepage of [www.vasectomy.com](http://www.vasectomy.com). The header includes the site name and tagline: "authoritative information from doctors about vasectomy & vasectomy reversal". Navigation links include HOME, PROCEDURE, FIND A DOCTOR, FINANCIAL HELP, RESOURCES, and ABOUT US. The main content area features several articles with featured doctors' photos and names:

- Scalpel vs. no Scalpel VASECTOMY** by Ted Bendurev, MD (Mission Viejo, CA). Article text: "What's in a name? There's more than one vasectomy technique. Here are some important distinctions..."
- Take This Test** by Ted Bendurev, MD (Mission Viejo, CA). Article text: "It's a vasectomy right for you? Learn from this sensitive quiz..."
- Common FEARS: Real... Imagined** by Sarah Girard, MD (Lockport, Rochester, NY). Article text: "The idea of having a vasectomy can raise fears - both real and unimagined - about the procedure and what to expect..."
- How to Locate a Doctor in Your Area** by Ted Bendurev, MD (Mission Viejo, CA). Article text: "Here are some ways to help you find a qualified professional in your vicinity..."
- NO SCALPEL VASECTOMY Top Ten QUESTIONS & ANSWERS** by Ted Bendurev, MD (Mission Viejo, CA). Article text: "What men - and their wives - want to know. Here is a checklist of some of the most frequently asked questions..."
- What if we have a change of heart?** by Larry Lightbulb, MD (Houston, TX). Article text: "Is a vasectomy permanent?"
- How Much will it Cost?** by Ted Bendurev, MD (Mission Viejo, CA). Article text: "affordability"
- What a Woman Wants to Know** by Ted Bendurev, MD (Mission Viejo, CA). Article text: "After Procedure"

At the bottom, there is an advertisement for "Present Your Professional Message to Quality Viewers" and a footer with site navigation and legal disclaimers.

A procedure-specific website, [www.vasectomy.com](http://www.vasectomy.com) provides authoritative information about vasectomy, vasectomy reversal, and related topics while showcasing urology practices that perform the procedures.

opportunity is to reach financially qualified patients. Using interactive technology is not just a means of making us more available to patients—it is a professional, credible way to bring more patients to us in an increasingly fast-paced, competitive environment. **UT**