

'The data is what the data is:' Vasectomy consults, searches rise after Roe v. Wade leak



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The prospect of a potential Supreme Court reversal of Roe v. Wade has skyrocketed online vasectomy [searches](#) and surged inquiries at two Ohio urology centers so far this month.



On May 3, Politico published a [majority opinion](#) leaked from the court signaling that it would overturn the landmark 1973 decision granting federal protection for abortions in favor of sending the authority to each individual state.

Within 24 hours of that leak, which was later confirmed to be authentic by Chief Justice John Roberts, online searches for vasectomies soared throughout the United States, including Ohio and Kentucky.

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Urology centers have seen an increased number of inquiries recently, too.

The Urology Group, a Norwood-based network of more than 35 physicians in 11 locations in the Cincinnati region, is reporting a 20% increase in the average number of consultations it schedules per day.

The group, which performs around 2,700 vasectomies annually, is scheduling an average of 25 consultations per day this month, according to internal data provided.

That's an uptick from last year when averages ranged from 14-20 per day. The highest previous average in the last year, 21, came in March.

On one single day this month, May 10, seven days after the leaked draft, the Urology Group scheduled 40 vasectomy consultations.

"That is a high day," Dr. Aaron Bey, a urologist who has been with the Urology Group for 12 years, said about the May 10 data, stopping short of classifying the increase as significant, however.

"The data is what the data is," he continued. "We're seeing a modest increase it appears."

Dr. Petar Bajic, a urologist with the Cleveland Clinic, also estimates he's seeing an increase in consultations and procedures by about 15-20% recently, but said that rise started a few months ago and could still be a lingering effect of COVID-19.

"Even since October for us, there's been an increase," said Bajic, who is also a member of the American Urological Association. "...I think it's probably both (COVID and the Supreme Court leak) that's contributing."

Online inquiries about vasectomies increase sharply

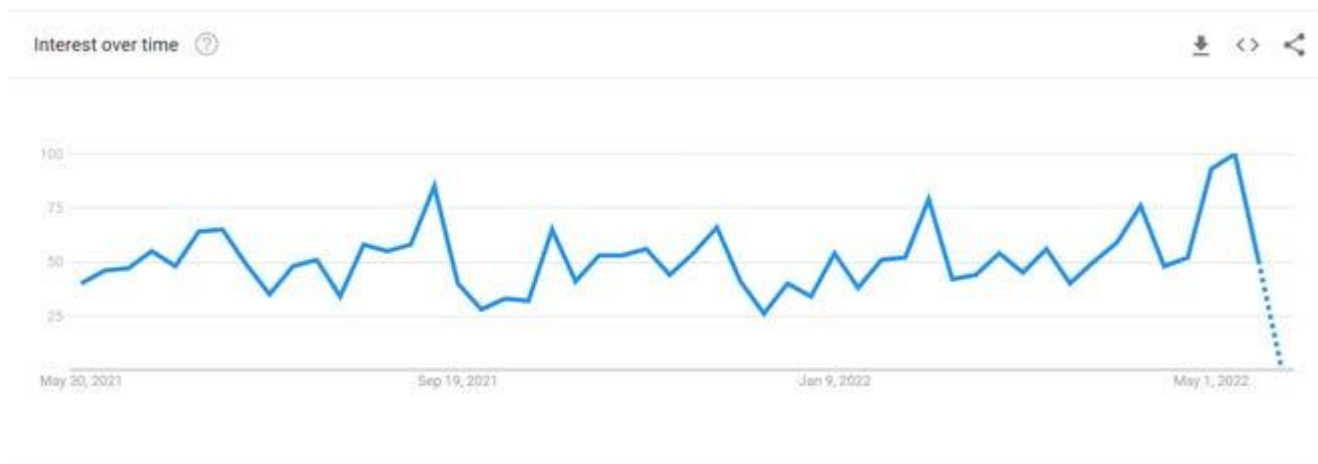
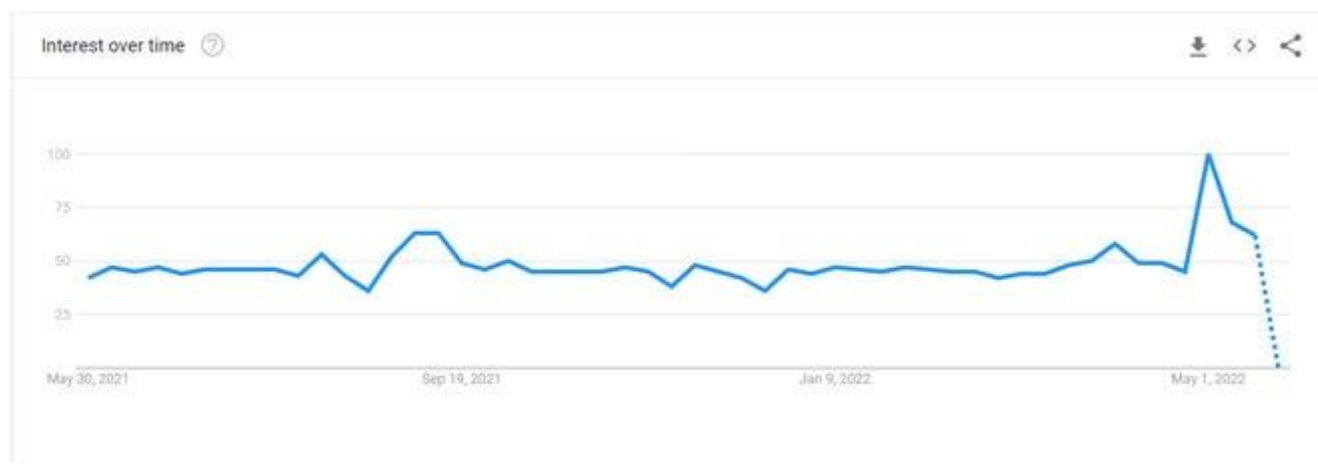
Innerbody Research, a home health product research company, analyzed Google trends and search volume

data and similarly concluded that daily searches for vasectomies in the U.S. are up 99% since the Roe v. Wade leak sent shockwaves throughout the nation earlier in the month.

The company found that the specific search "how much is a vasectomy" shot up by 250% after the leak, and the search "vasectomy near me" has come up most frequently in Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, and Florida – all states expected to impose restrictions of some sorts should Roe v. Wade be overturned.

In a statement, the company's chief executive officer Eric Rodriguez said: "With searches relating to this procedure continuing to rise daily, we likely will start hearing more about males taking the leap to protect themselves and their partners from unwanted pregnancies."

The three most popular searches related to vasectomies in Ohio over the past seven days are "vasectomy cost," "vasectomy reversal," and "vasectomy near me," according to Google Trends. In Kentucky, "vasectomy reversal," "what is a vasectomy?" and "vasectomy near me" are the most popular searches recently.



Depending on a number of factors such as where the procedure occurs, what kind of health insurance you have, and what type of vasectomy you receive (there are two types: incision and no-cut method), the procedure can cost from \$0 to \$1,000. Vasectomies are an outpatient procedure usually done in a urologist's office. The procedure itself typically takes around 30 minutes and is low risk for complications or seizures.



There are risks, however, including chronic pain, fluid buildup, inflammation and abnormal cysts. Full recovery takes a few days according to the Mayo Clinic, and limited activity for 24 hours after the procedure is advised.

While abortion is currently legal in all 50 states under Roe protections, which were upheld by the court's 1992 Planned Parenthood v. Casey ruling, a reversal would trigger automatic bans in some states. Significant restrictions are expected in nearly half the country's states including Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio. Bans on certain types of emergency contraception such as Plan B or morning-after pills are also being discussed in some states.

Bajic concedes even though he started seeing increases in vasectomies a few months before the Supreme Court leak, he's noticed that the leak has caused renewed attention to be placed on vasectomies, a procedure that is 99.99% effective in preventing pregnancies. He believes the procedure is "highly underutilized" and though he considers the reason for the renewed attention to be "unfortunate" and "suboptimal," a spread of awareness for

vasectomies as a viable birth control option could be a positive thing, he said.

"It will be interesting to see how it pans out in the next month or two," he said, "but just anecdotally, people in my practice are asking about it, friends are asking me about it, and I do think a lot of people are talking about it right now because it is the safest form of permanent contraception."

Preparations in case 'Roe v. Wade' is reversed

The leaked draft could become an official ruling any time from now until the court ends its term at the end of June or in early July. According to the court's processes and procedures, an order list, (which is a public report of the court's actions) is released on Monday mornings, while opinions are typically released on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and the third Monday of each sitting. The two most popular timeframes for vasectomies, according to Bey and Bajic, are near the end of the year and around the March Madness college basketball tournament.

"A lot of people don't realize this but the busiest time of year is typically December," Bey said. "And the reason for that is a lot of people have hit their deductible and we get a lot of patients that say I have to have it done by the end of the year, if I do it's covered by my insurance, if not then my deductible resets."

The March basketball tournament is also often a convenient time to schedule an appointment, Bajic added.

"Everybody wants to be able to sit on the couch and watch March Madness," he said. "If they have the surgery, they kind of have to be sitting around for a couple of days and

it's a free pass where they don't have to help with the kids or help with the yard work they could just sit around and watch TV."

The two doctors each perform around 3 to 5 vasectomies per week in addition to consulting with prospective patients. Should the need for more resources become a reality, Bajic said the centers will adjust to meet the demand.

"I think it's an evolving situation," he said. "We're kind of continuously analyzing and trying to understand where we need to make efforts to improve access."

