

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

Post-vasectomy semen analysis

What is post-vasectomy semen analysis?

A vasectomy is regarded as one of the safest and most effective forms of birth control. However, it is important that instructions are followed very carefully after your operation.

Evidence has shown that immediately after the operation, most men will still produce semen which contains potentially fertile sperm. Most unplanned pregnancies, which have occurred immediately after a vasectomy, have been caused by men not using contraceptive precautions or not having post-vasectomy semen analysis tests.

When do I have the tests?

Your GP, or doctor who carried out the operation, will ask you to provide a semen sample between **16 and 22 weeks after your operation**. There is a higher chance of finding sperm if you attend earlier than the recommended 16 weeks.

In order to make sure that the tubes from your testicles are cleared of remaining sperm, you must have **ejaculated at least 24 times** after your operation before arranging for post-vasectomy semen testing.

What if I don't go for the tests?

Failure to attend for post-vasectomy semen testing could result in an unplanned pregnancy.

It takes several weeks for the tubes to clear all of the remaining sperm, and there is a small chance of vasectomy failure. Your doctor or surgeon cannot take responsibility if you do not have these post-vasectomy tests to ensure the procedure was successful.

What do I have to do now?

Ensure that your referring doctor has given you a request form, a sterile and toxicity tested container and a specimen bag. Make sure your specimen pot has not expired and has a weight (in g) on the pot. These details are found on the sample pot.

Telephone Cellular Pathology at King's Mill Hospital on 01623 672382, to arrange an appointment to deliver your sample to your nearest laboratory.

You will need to take the semen sample to the laboratory within **one hour** of production and deliver it in person.

Please book your appointment immediately after your operation as there could be a long wait time for an appointment.

We are unable to accept any samples without an appointment.

If you have any questions about the test, Cellular Pathology staff will be pleased to answer these for you. Our opening hours are 8.30am-5pm, Monday to Friday.

We do not provide facilities to produce your semen sample. Please produce your sample at home.

Appointments at King's Mill Hospital are available on **Thursdays**. The address is:

Cellular Pathology Department
King's Mill Hospital
Mansfield Road
Sutton in Ashfield
Nottinghamshire
NG17 4JL

Appointments at Newark Hospital are available on **Wednesdays**. The address is:

Pathology Department
Newark Hospital
Boundary Road
Newark
Nottinghamshire
NG24 4DE

You are required to **abstain from any sexual activity (masturbation or intercourse) for two to three days but no longer than seven days** prior to your appointment date to ensure that the best sample is obtained.

How do I collect the sample?

1. Make sure that your full name, NHS number and date of birth are written on the sample container and warm the container to body temperature in a trouser or internal jacket pocket for about ten minutes.
2. Be hygienic – wash your hands and genitals. **Do not wash the container.**
3. Collect **all** the semen produced by masturbating directly into the sample container. Do not use a contraceptive sheath or wash out the container as this will spoil the sample.

You **must only** use the container provided. If you spill any part of the semen sample, indicate on the request form.

It is essential that you are absolutely honest about how complete the sample is. An incomplete sample could lead to inaccurate results and misinterpretation of the test.

4. Once the sample has been collected, please make sure that the lid is **screwed on tightly**. Write your name, the time and date that the sample was collected on the container label and place the container in the specimen bag provided.
5. Ensure that you bring the fully completed request form with you to the laboratory as we are unable to accept your sample without this.
6. Please deliver the sample to the laboratory **within one hour of the sample being produced** and attend as close to your appointment time as possible. We regret that if you are late for your appointment, we may not be able to perform your test as the sample may be too old to give accurate results and it may overlap with other booked appointments.

You should give yourself ample time to arrive, especially if travelling by car as parking can sometimes be difficult.

Keep the sample close to your body in a trouser or internal jacket pocket while travelling to the laboratory, as sperm are sensitive to extremes of temperature and should be kept between 20 and 37 degrees Celsius.

Where do I deliver the sample to? King's Mill Hospital

Cellular Pathology Department (or Histology) is found by following the signs to the Bereavement Centre and the MRI Scanner. The department's main door is situated to the right just as you turn off the main corridor towards the Bereavement Centre and the MRI Scanner.

Please press the call button to the right of the door and a member of staff will let you in and meet you at the top of the stairs.

There is a free 15 minute drop off/ collection zone outside King's Mill Hospital's main reception and volunteers are available in the entrance foyer to give directions.

Newark Hospital

The Pathology Department is situated on the ground floor next to the Mercia Doughty Preoperative Assessment Unit. When you arrive at Pathology you should take your sample to the delivery hatch at the reception.

The staff will check your details and take the sample from you. You are free to leave once you have handed in your sample as **your results will be forwarded to your referring doctor.**

Site maps and directions to King's Mill Hospital and Newark Hospital can be found on the Trust's website:
<https://www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk/>

How is my sample tested?

We examine a portion of the semen sample to check for the presence of sperm. If sperm are present, we comment on the number of sperm seen and whether motile (moving) sperm are seen.

What will cause my sample to be rejected?

Your sample will be rejected due to any of the below:

- Leaking or incomplete samples.
- Confirmed high risk samples (e.g. HIV positive).
- Unlabelled specimens.
- Delivered to Cellular Pathology without a prior appointment.
- Not produced into an appropriate, in-date toxicity tested, pre-weighed and labelled container.

- Delivered to Cellular Pathology more than two hours after production, if it is the first sample.
- Delivered to Cellular Pathology more than 45 minutes after production, if assessing for sperm motility (patient has had a previous test where sperm were detected).
- Samples received without a completed form.

How do I get my results?

Your results will normally be sent back to your referring doctor (GP or consultant) approximately 2-3 weeks after your test. Results are not given out over the telephone.

What happens to my samples after they have been tested?

Once we have tested your samples and sent results back to your referring doctor, we incinerate the remaining fluid.

Your remaining sample may be used by us for training or quality control purposes. If you have any objections to your waste sample being used for this purpose, please indicate this on the request form.

How do I know you provide a quality service?

We participate in the UK National External Quality Assurance Scheme, where our performance is monitored against national benchmarks.

Further sources of information

NHS Choices: www.nhs.uk/conditions

Our website: www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk

Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

King's Mill Hospital: 01623 672222

Newark Hospital: 01636 685692

Email: sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net

If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net.

Protection of Personal Information

The Trust's policy on protection of personal information is detailed on the Trust's internet page in the Data Protection, Confidentiality and Disclosure Policy.

This information can be made available in alternative formats, such as easy read or large print, and may be available in alternative languages, upon request. Please telephone 01623 672232 or email: sfh-tr.information.governance@nhs.net.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant health professional would give you.

External websites may be referred to in specific cases. Any external websites are provided for your information and convenience. We cannot accept responsibility for the information found on them.

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet (if relevant) please email sfh-tr.patientinformation@nhs.net or telephone 01623 622515, extension 6927.

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