

Semen analysis (Andrology)

Producing a sample of semen for examination

Introduction

You have been asked to produce a sample of semen for analysis (examination).

Semen analysis is looking closely at the sample, through a microscope, to see how many moving sperm cells are present and whether they are normal in appearance.

The quality of semen is a vital factor in fertility and for this reason careful examination of a semen sample is of great importance. This examination needs to be done in a laboratory and may need repeating.

Sample production

All patients are offered an appointment to the use of the on-site production room, to produce their semen sample. This is to make sure that samples are as fresh as possible to enable accurate analysis.

Containers will be available in the room for you to collect your semen sample. It is important that you use this container as they have been tested for sperm toxicity. Use of any other pot may lead to rejection of the sample.

Important note: Using a public toilet to produce your sample is against the law.

If you feel you need to produce your sample at home, you must be able to bring it to the laboratory at the time stated in your appointment letter. You will be provided with a specimen container. You must live close enough to drop your sample off, preferably within 30 minutes (no later than 50 minutes) of production.

Either you or your partner can drop off the specimen.

Keep the sample warm (body temperature) by carrying it upright in an inside pocket, but do not let become too hot.

You will not need to be seen by a doctor, but your paperwork will be checked by the laboratory staff to make sure that all the information has been completed.

Please make sure that your full name and date of birth is written clearly on the container, if we cannot read the name, we will not be able to process your sample. A completed microbiology request form and the appointment letter must also accompany the sample.

Your sample will be processed as soon as we receive it.

Samples cannot be sent through the post or dropped off at your GP's surgery. These will be rejected.

Appointments

The Microbiology Department at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital provides a countywide semen analysis service for GPs, hospital consultants and fertility clinics.

To arrange for a sample of semen to be examined by the laboratory, please contact the andrology team. They will make an appointment for you to produce a semen sample onsite, as per our guidelines. **The contact details are at the end of this leaflet.**

You will receive your appointment details through the post, even if you have had an initial email reply. This is because there are important questions on the appointment letter that need to be completed.

Appointments are available between 8:40am and 11:20am, Monday to Friday.

Please make sure that you keep your appointment or contact us if you need to cancel or rearrange it. Patients who do not turn up for their appointment on 2 occasions, without letting us know, will be referred to their GP or consultant.

Please arrive promptly at your appointment time and bring your appointment letter and GP/consultant referral letter with you. Late arrivals may not be able to use the room and will have to re-book their appointment.

Abstinence (no intercourse or masturbation)

A period of abstinence has an effect on the quality of a semen sample. If a period of abstinence is either too long or too short, this can affect the results of the examination.

For us to look at the best quality semen sample, we ask that you do not ejaculate for 48 hours (but no longer than 7 days) before giving the sample.

The only really satisfactory way to produce a semen sample for analysis is by masturbation into a special container. The reason for this is that when you ejaculate, most of the sperm are in the first portion and if you try to collect the sample by interrupting intercourse, it is likely that you will not collect quality sperm. This could mean that we may diagnose a problem which does not exist.

If some of the semen fails to enter the container, please make a note of this in the appropriate box on your appointment letter.

Results

The results will be sent to your GP or consultant about 5 to 7 days after the sample has been tested. We prefer you to attend the fertility clinic or your GP's surgery to receive the results so that any questions you may have can be answered.

Please note: We regret we cannot discuss results with patients. You will be referred back to your GP or consultant.

Contact information

To book or change an appointment, or if you have a query:

Email: ghn-tr.andrologyappointmentsgrh@nhs.net

or leave a message on the

Andrology Appointment Line

Tel: 0300 422 4200 (answerphone)

Please leave a message with your full name, date of birth and contact telephone number.

Appointments are only available between 8:40am and 11:20am, Monday to Friday.

We are closed Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays. Any samples received outside of working hours will be rejected.

Finding us

We are based in Pathology, in The Edward Jenner building. This is at the back of the hospital on Mayhill Way. Please see the map on the back of your appointment letter.

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Shared Decision Making

If you are asked to make a choice, you may have lots of questions that you want to ask. You may also want to talk over your options with your family or friends. It can help to write a list of the questions you want answered and take it to your appointment.

Ask 3 Questions

To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions if you asked to make a choice about your healthcare.

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



These resources have been adapted with kind permission from the MAGIC Programme, supported by the Health Foundation.

***Ask 3 Questions** is based on Shepherd HL, et al. Three questions that patients can ask to improve the quality of information physicians give about treatment options: A cross-over trial.

Patient Education and Counselling, 2011;84: 379-85



<https://aqua.nhs.uk/resources/shared-decision-making-case-studies/>



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