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The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk if you would like a reference list.

Author: Wendy Thornton
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Information after a vasectomy (page 1 of 3)

Post vasectomy semen analysis – What is it?

Vasectomy is regarded as one of the safest and most effective methods of birth control for couples who have completed their families. Immediately after the operation however, most men will continue to produce semen with potentially fertile sperm until the effects of the procedure cause sperm production to stop. Most of the unplanned pregnancies which have occurred immediately after a vasectomy are usually caused by the couple failing to use effective contraceptive precautions or failing to have a semen analysis.

Post-vasectomy semen analysis is the test done by the laboratory to confirm that “No sperms are seen”, however, this test does NOT exclude presence of a very small number of sperms in the sample provided.

What if I don't go for the test?

Failure to have a post vasectomy semen test could, in the worst case, result in an unwanted/unplanned pregnancy. As it takes a while for the tubes leading from your testicles to clear all the remaining sperm and there is a very small chance of failure of the vasectomy, your doctor or surgeon cannot take any responsibility for this if you do not have post-vasectomy tests as advised by your doctor.

When should I produce my sample?

Semen sample analysis is carried out between 9.00am and 12 noon Monday to Friday (excluding Bank Holidays).

Your first semen analysis must be at least 16 weeks and 24 ejaculations after your operation and your next semen sample analysis 2 to 4 weeks after the first analysis. You will need a minimum of two consecutive semen samples, 2-4 weeks apart, with “No sperms seen”.

Barrier contraceptive methods should be used before two samples reporting ‘no sperms seen’ have been recorded.

Collection of the sample

Please note that facilities are not available to produce semen samples at the Pathology Department at Salisbury NHS Foundation Trust.

- The specimen must be collected in the morning.
- You must not have had sex or masturbated for 48 hours before collecting the sample.

Andrology Laboratory
Tel: 01722 429099

- You should have had an abstinence period of no longer than 7 days.
- First wash your hands and genitals with soap and water. Please ensure complete removal of all soap residues and dry thoroughly.
- Please use the sterile container provided. If you have either mislaid the pot or not been given one, you will need to collect a replacement from your GP's surgery.
- Do not open the container until you are ready to produce the sample.
- Collect the sample by masturbation, collecting the entire specimen directly into the container. (Do not use a sheath or a condom for collection as they are harmful to sperm).
- The whole sample should be collected for examination. If the whole sample is not collected then please state clearly on your request form 'incomplete'. If you spill any part of the sample, the test will be invalid, as this lost portion could have contained live sperm.
- Immediately after sample collection seal the container with the lid; make sure that the lid is on tightly. Do not use adhesive tape to seal the lid.

Write on the container label:

- * Your name ✓ Date of birth ✓ Date and time of production
- Record your period of abstinence on the request form and ensure the name of the requesting consultant or GP, as well as your name, address and date of birth are also on the form.
- **Please note: No other type of sample container or collection are acceptable.**
- The sample should be kept at or near body temperature (in a pocket near to your body) before delivery to the laboratory.

Delivery of the sample

Deliver the sample and completed form to the Pathology Reception within two hours of collection. For this reason, postal delivery is not acceptable. Personal delivery of the specimen is strongly recommended.

The sample will not be processed if the container is unlabelled/incompletely labelled or if the details on the specimen container and request form do not match.

The specimen must reach the laboratory between 9.00am and 12 noon, Monday to Friday (there is no service at weekends or on Bank Holidays). Late specimens may not be examined and a repeat will be requested.

If you have any difficulties with the collection and delivery of your sample, please contact the laboratory on 01722 429099.

When will I get my results?

You will get your results from your referring doctor. Please do not telephone the laboratory for these results as the staff are not allowed to give them out verbally.

Andrology Laboratory

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If the result is “No sperms are seen” you will be told this by your doctor.

You may be asked to provide more samples if the test is inconclusive or there are live sperm present.

You should carry on using an alternative method of contraception until you have received confirmation of the success of your vasectomy.

Your assurance of quality

The laboratory runs a comprehensive quality control programme and is enrolled on the UK National External Quality Assurance Scheme (UKNEQAS).