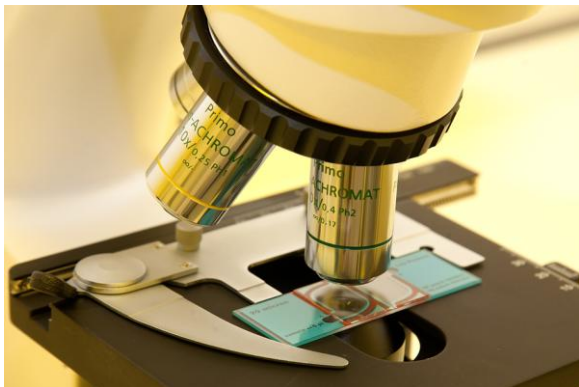




Cambridge IVF



Post vasectomy semen analysis – Information for Patients



Introduction

Semen testing to confirm the absence of sperm in your semen (azoospermia) following vasectomy is an absolutely essential part of the process. This is why you have been asked to produce a semen sample for testing at Cambridge IVF following your vasectomy procedure.

This process enables your doctor to confirm that the vasectomy procedure has been successful. You will need to produce more than one sample over a period of time to ensure that sperm do not start to appear again in your semen sample.

Semen analysis is the examination of your semen using a microscope to determine in your case whether or not sperm are present to allow us to confirm if your vasectomy procedure has been successful.

What do I have to do?

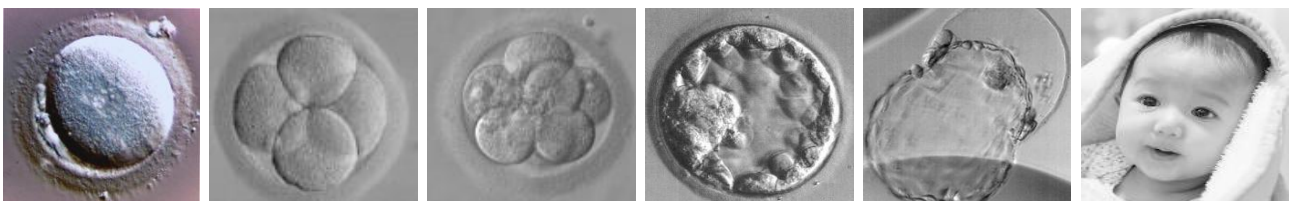
Firstly, you need to ensure that your doctor has provided you with two completed semen analysis referral forms both indicating a request for a post vasectomy semen analysis. You can either produce your samples at Cambridge IVF or, if you live within 30 minutes travel time of Cambridge IVF you have the option to produce the sample at home. We will provide you with a suitable sterile container on both occasions when you arrive or you can collect your containers from Cambridge IVF prior to your appointment if you wish to produce at home. We will only accept samples produced into our own containers as we know these are fit for purpose and will not compromise the quality of the sample.

Secondly, you need to ensure that your first sample is produced **no earlier than 16 weeks** post vasectomy and that your second samples is produced **no earlier than 20 weeks** post vasectomy. Before you produce the first sample you must ensure that you have ejaculated **no less than 20 times** following your vasectomy. These measures are in place to ensure that we are as likely as possible to be able to give you clearance post vasectomy with as little inconvenience to you as possible.

Finally, you need to telephone the Andrology Service on 01223 349017 and arrange two appointment times to produce your samples for analysis. The first appointment should be no less than 16 weeks following your vasectomy procedure; the second sample should be four to six weeks thereafter.

Please note it is likely there will be a wait of two to four weeks before we are able to offer you an appointment.

In order to get the best sample from you we require you to abstain from any sexual activity (including masturbation) for between two and five days (but in no case more than seven days) prior to your appointment date.



At Cambridge IVF we have quiet and discrete rooms available for you in which you can produce your sample.

The facility is open from 08:00 to 17:00 Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays). Appointments are available to semen analysis patients between the hours of 08:45 and 15:45 on Tuesdays and Thursdays and from 11:00 to 15:45 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Cambridge IVF does **not** operate a sample 'drop in service' as semen analysis is a time critical test and specimens must be produced and analysed at appropriate and pre arranged times. If you arrive more than 30 minutes after your allocated appointment time or do not have your referral form with you, we will be unable to perform your test and you may have to re-book the appointment. You should therefore give yourself plenty of time to arrive, especially if travelling by car. We do have ample free parking onsite but the roads surrounding Cambridge can sometimes be unexpectedly congested. If you cannot keep your appointment time for any reason please call and we will re-book your appointment for the next mutually convenient time and date.

How do I collect the sample?

Samples are either produced on site at Cambridge IVF in one of our dedicated sample rooms or at home in certain cases. Although our rooms are well proportioned we suggest that you produce your sample on your own; we do not recommend your partner accompanies you into the room although they are very welcome to wait for you in our waiting area.

- Firstly ensure that you have booked an appointment time
- Ensure that you have been provided with a completed semen analysis request form from your doctor and they have indicated the test required is a **post vasectomy semen analysis**. Your form should have your name, date of birth, NHS number, partner's name, partner's date of birth and the date on which your vasectomy was performed
- Abstain from any sexual activity for two to five days but for no more than seven
- At your allocated appointment time a member of our laboratory team will greet you from the waiting area, check your referral form is completed correctly and provide you with an appropriately labelled sample container (or collect the sample from you if you produced the sample at home). If you are producing the sample at Cambridge IVF, we will show you to the private sample room in which you can produce your sample



- If you are producing at home please bring along photo ID such as a driving license or passport so we can confirm your identity otherwise we cannot accept your sample for analysis
- Thoroughly wash, rinse and dry your penis, testicles and hands before you produce the sample
- If producing the sample at home; masturbate and collect the sample into the container making sure you tightly cap it and place it in the self sealing bag provided. Immediately transport the sample to Cambridge IVF keeping it close to the body for example in a jacket pocket during transportation
- If producing at Cambridge IVF, masturbate and collect the sample into the container making sure you tightly cap it and place it in the hatch to the laboratory (along with your completed referral form). Close the hatch and press the switch to let the lab team know your sample is ready for collection
- Complete the bottom part of the referral form; we need this information to ensure we get as much accurate information from your semen analysis as possible. If any of this information is missing we will not be able to accept the sample so it's **very important** that you take the time to check it's completed correctly
- Inform us if any of your sample misses your container during production. Most of the sperm in the ejaculate are contained in the first part. If you do miss some of the sample we may ask you to repeat the test as we cannot confirm there are no sperm present in an incomplete sample



Our production rooms have been designed to be comfortable and private and a video system is available to you should you wish to use it. A hatch system links each room directly to the laboratory to allow easy delivery of your sample. Further instructions will be given to you by our team before you produce the sample.

Please note that masturbation is the only recommended method for collecting the sample 'cleanly' for analysis. The withdrawal method (vaginal, oral or anal) is not recommended as it is likely that some of the sample will be lost and may in any case be contaminated. The first part of the ejaculate contains most of the sperm so this is particularly important.



Ordinary condoms cannot be used as these contain a spermicide which will kill any sperm in the ejaculate.

If you have any problems producing your sample, please give us a call, we will happily arrange another appointment for you.

How will my sample be tested?

We examine the sample under the microscope to determine if any sperm are present in the sample and carry out the following tests:

- **Sperm volume**

We record the actual volume in millilitres of the semen sample you provided. We do not expect you to fill the container; an average ejaculate will be around 2.5 ml but some men will produce more or less semen.

- **Sperm concentration (sperm count)**

Reported as millions per millilitre of semen. We use a microscope to identify if sperm are present in a droplet of your sample and if any are, we count the number of sperm in the sample using a special counting chamber and report this finding to your doctor.

- **Sperm motility**

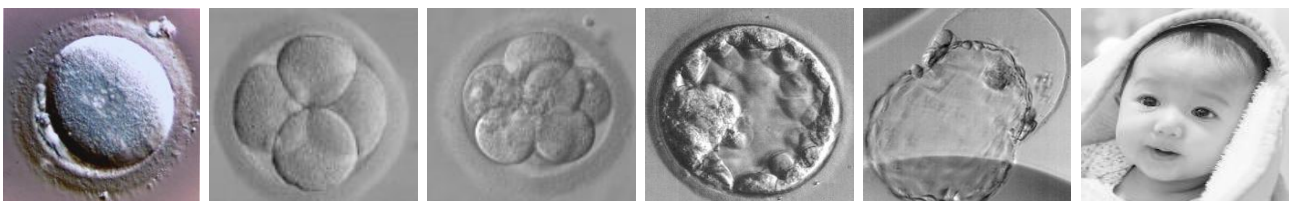
If sperm are present in the sample, the sperm are grouped into four groups with the strongest swimmers (grade 'a') being the most fertile. If there are motile sperm in your sample we cannot grant you clearance as just a single motile sperm could fertilise an egg.

- **Sample centrifugation**

If no sperm are seen from the droplet of sperm examined we load the whole sample into a test tube and spin it in a machine called a centrifuge which causes any cells in the sample (including sperm) to form a concentrated 'pellet' in the bottom of the tube. This can then be harvested and examined under the microscope to confirm whether or not there are sperm present in your sample.

How will I get my results?

A written report will be sent to your referring doctor approximately three working days after the test was performed. Try not to become too anxious if your GP is unable to answer all of your questions, it may be that they need to contact Cambridge IVF for more information or advice. For reasons of confidentiality we never give out results over the telephone so please understand the good reasons why any such request will be politely declined.



How do I know when my sample is clear?

Clearance post vasectomy is defined as follows:

- two azoospermic semen samples (samples with no sperm in the ejaculate)
- one specimen with <10,000 immotile sperm followed by one azoospermic semen sample

If your samples fall into these criteria following analysis you will be granted clearance to stop using other forms of contraception.

There are still sperm in my sample(s), what does this mean?

Persistent non moving (immotile) sperm can remain in men for several reasons and your doctor will explain what they believe is the reason for this to you. 'Special clearance' can be granted by your doctor in such cases where a concentration of less than 10,000 immotile sperm remains 28 weeks following vasectomy.

Cambridge IVF cannot be held accountable where clearance has been granted in such circumstances and a patient then goes on to form a pregnancy.

Our commitment to quality in our service

The laboratory team at Cambridge IVF have a combined experience of over 40 years in performing the range of tests which in combination provide a complete and accurate semen analysis. All tests are performed in accordance with the guidance set out by the World Health Organisation (WHO), the British Andrology Society (BAS) and the Association of Biomedical Anthologists (ABA). The laboratory subscribes to the National External Quality Assurance Scheme (UKNEQAS) for Reproductive Medicine which includes diagnostic semen analysis.

Queries or Complaints

If you have any questions regarding any part of the Andrology Service provided by Cambridge IVF please do not hesitate to contact us using any of the contact details on the back of this information at any time between the hours of 08:30 and 16:30. If you are unhappy with any part of the service or wish to speak to someone about an issue relating to your care please contact our lead clinical scientist or if you prefer, the Patient Liaison Service (PALS) at Addenbrooke's Hospital, who you can reach by emailing pals@addenbrookes.nhs.uk or telephoning extension 2756 at Addenbrooke's Hospital.





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We are now a smoke-free site: smoking will not be allowed anywhere on the hospital site.

For advice and support in quitting, contact your GP or the free NHS stop smoking helpline on 0800 169 0 169.

Other formats:



If you would like this information in another language, large print or audio, please ask the department where you are being treated, to contact the patient information team:

patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk.



Please note: We do not currently hold many leaflets in other languages; written translation requests are funded and agreed by the department who has authored the leaflet.

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