Semen Fertility Assessment

Semen Analysis – What is it?
Approximately 1 in 6 couples have difficulty in conceiving and almost one third of these may be due to a sperm problem. Sperm problems can range from the complete absence of sperm, to having low numbers or simply poor quality and currently the only reliable method we have for detecting these is by semen analysis. Semen analysis is basically the microscopic examination of the semen to see how many sperm there are and whether they function correctly.

Why do you need to do this now?
You have been asked to produce a semen sample at home for testing in the laboratory as part of a fertility assessment for you and your partner. Although we recognise that this can be an embarrassing procedure, useful information can be gained from just one semen sample and quite often no further tests are required. The results will help us decide whether or not treatment is necessary.

How do you get a semen analysis appointment?
Appointments can only be made following consultation with your GP or Fertility specialist. They will give you a form to hand in and a specimen container. If you have no container then one will have to be collected from us. It is very important to use the correct container as these have been tested as harmless to sperm. You will need to telephone the laboratory on: 01202 442793 to make an appointment for your sample to be analysed. Appointments are only available on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday. As we have to carefully plan our work, samples must be received in the laboratory between 08.30 and 11.00am. You should give yourself ample time to arrive, especially if travelling by car as parking is sometimes difficult. If, for any reason, you cannot keep the appointment, please telephone us on the number above to make another appointment. If you fail to notify the laboratory, you will not automatically receive another appointment and will need to telephone to make another.

How to collect and deliver the sample
Before producing your sample you must:
- Abstain from sexual activity for 2 days (but no longer than 7 days)
- You must also be hygienic, washing your hands and genital area beforehand
- Use only the container provided
- The whole sample must be collected
- Once the sample has been produced, label the sample with your Surname, Forename, DOB, Date & time produced and Hospital or NHS number if known
- Keep your sample warm whilst travelling to the laboratory, as sperm are sensitive to temperature changes
- Aim to deliver the sample within 30minutes of its production but no longer than 1 hour
- Facilities for producing a sample at the hospital are available by special arrangement and 24 hrs notice. Please indicate if this is required when booking an appointment.

Special collection procedures
For some members of the community it is not possible, due to ethnic or religious reasons, to produce a sample by masturbation. Please contact the laboratory for advice regarding producing your sample.
Check your sample is clearly labelled before delivery at the laboratory
Samples should be produced by masturbation into the sterile container provided. Withdrawal (coitus interruptus) is not recommended for collecting the sample as it is too easy to lose the first portion of the sample. Ordinary condoms should not be used as they contain spermicide that will kill the sperm. If you have any problems producing the specimen, please telephone the laboratory.

Where is the Laboratory?
We are situated on the ground floor of Poole Hospital. The specimen reception area is located in the pathology specimen reception. The laboratory begins sample testing at 08.30am Monday, Wednesday and Thursday.

When you arrive – what to expect
When you arrive at the Hospital, you should take your sample to the pathology specimen reception. The staff will escort you to the pathology patient consultation room to check your details and take the sample from you. Please ensure you complete any necessary paperwork carefully and fully and please inform staff of any problems e.g. any spillage.

Please do not leave your sample unattended as it will rapidly cool and kill your sperm

How are Sperm tested?
We examine a number of important sperm factors which all contribute towards a man’s ability to conceive.

- **Sperm Concentration**: Number or “sperm count”, in millions per mL of semen
- **Sperm Motility**: Sperm are graded on their ability to “swim”
- **Sperm Morphology**: The shape and size of the sperm

Results
To get the most meaningful information from your test, you will need to see your “referring doctor” for your result, usually the fertility specialist or the GP. The results should reach your doctor approximately 48 hours after the test. Try not to be too anxious if your GP does not have the result or cannot answer all of your questions. He or she may need to contact the laboratory either for a copy of the result or for further information. For reasons of confidentiality we never give results directly to patients or their relatives

Repeat tests
We quite often ask for a repeat of your test because of one or more of the factors listed above may be outside the expected range. However, other factors can affect your fertility results e.g. previous illnesses, stress, smoking or medication

Your assurance of quality
The Andrology section of the Cytology laboratory is staffed by fully qualified and trained in all aspects of semen analysis. The laboratory is fully accredited and is enrolled on the UK National External Quality Assurance Scheme (UKNEQAS).

Our Address
Cytology Department
Poole Hospital NHS Trust
Longfleet Road
Poole
Dorset BH15 2JB

Tel: 01202 442793 to make an appointment or for technical information