

**Patient  
Information**

# Producing a sample of semen for examination

## Introduction

You have been asked to produce a sample of semen for examination. Semen analysis is looking closely at semen through a microscope to see how many moving sperm cells are present and whether they look normal in appearance.

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

## 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 our assessment.

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.

## Production of the semen sample

**Note: Using a public toilet to produce your sample is against the law.**

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 on your appointment letter.**

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Microbiology

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## Patient Information

### Appointments

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

If you are arranging for a sample of semen to be sent to the laboratory for investigation, you must be given an appointment by microbiology staff. The contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

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 back to their GP or consultant.

You will receive your appointment details through the post; this will also include a container for your semen sample. It is important that you use this container.

### Delivery of your sample to the hospital

**You will need to produce your sample at home and arrange to bring it to the laboratory for the time stated on your appointment letter. Samples cannot be sent through the post.**

Either you or your partner can do this. You will not need to be seen by a doctor.

It is important that semen samples are analysed soon after being given, as sperm begin to die quite quickly outside the body. So please deliver your sample to us as quickly as possible, at most within an hour of production. Keep the sample warm (body temperature) by carrying it upright in an inside pocket, but not keeping it too hot.

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 appointment letter must also accompany the sample.

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

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A long journey time (more than 1 hour), is likely to have a bad effect on your sample. If this is the case with your journey we suggest that you consider producing your sample at the laboratory. A private room is available.

This facility should be requested and reserved when you call to book your appointment. If you decide you want to use the room after your appointment has been booked, you must contact us to check whether it is available and to book a time slot.

Samples cannot be accepted at weekends or on bank holidays.

## 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.

## Contact information

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

### **Microbiology Department Appointments Voicemail Line**

Tel: 0300 422 4200

Please leave a message including your full name, date of birth and contact telephone number and we will ring you back to discuss your appointment.

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