

# Semen samples after your vasectomy

## Information for patients

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This leaflet contains important information about your semen samples after your procedure. Please ensure you read and follow the instructions carefully to ensure your samples can be analysed.

### **Date of operation:**

**1<sup>st</sup> sample due after:**

**2<sup>nd</sup> sample due after:**

**A vasectomy is not effective straight away and alternative, ongoing contraception is recommended.**

For around 1-2% of people, the vasectomy is not successful in producing sterility. We offer semen analysis to try and identify those 1-2% of people for whom the procedure has not been successful.

### **When to collect samples**

After the operation, it takes a number of months, and many ejaculations, to clear the tubes of any residual sperm and to be able to assess if the vasectomy has been successful or not. Once you have recovered from the operation, we recommend you ejaculate at least twice per week to ensure that **at least 20 ejaculations** have taken place prior to submitting your samples. Please delay submitting your samples if you have not had at least 20 ejaculations.

The first sample should be produced after a **minimum of 12 weeks**, and after a **minimum of 20 ejaculations** after your operation.

The second sample should be produced a minimum of 4 weeks after the first sample, so **at least 16 weeks** after the operation.

If sperm are still present, further samples are needed and you will be sent further instructions. Some people will require multiple semen analyses over many months.

### **In the week before you submit your sample:**

- You must ejaculate at least once in the 2-7 days prior to collecting your sample.
- There should be no sexual activity, including masturbation, in the 48 hours before you collect your sample.

### **How to collect the samples**

Collect your sample by masturbation. Do not use a condom (these contain spermicide) or collect your sample after intercourse or oral sex as this can lead to inaccurate results.

1. Before providing your sample, pass urine, wash your hands, wash genital area with warm water and dry with a towel.
2. Please use the container provided. Ensure that the container is labelled with your details.

3. Produce your sample by masturbation, ensure all the fluid from the ejaculation is collected and goes directly into the pot. Do not touch the inside of the specimen pot as it is sterile.
4. Replace the lid of the pot and ensure a good seal to avoid spillage.
5. Wipe the outside of the pot.
6. Write the date and time on the label already attached to the pot (and put the same date and time on the lab form).
7. Put the pot into the plastic moulded container.
8. Place container in the box along with the completed lab form.
9. Seal box.

## **Sending the samples**

Once you have followed the above instructions and have sealed the box, take this to your local post office or post box.

Send this to the lab with 48 hours tracked or 1<sup>st</sup> class postage. If you do not choose one of these options, this can prevent it being processed. This would then require a further sample, delaying the process.

## **Form completion and sample delivery:**

**Make sure you put the date and time on the specimen pot AND the pink/white form.** Please make sure the date of your vasectomy operation is on the form - if not, write it in.

## **Results**

Once we receive the results of your second sample, a letter will be sent to you and your GP advising you of the results. This can take a number of weeks. Please do not phone the clinic for results unless it has been more than 6 weeks since you submitted your **second** sample and you have not received your results.

Sending semen samples by post for semen analysis has been the standard procedure in Lothian for many years. However, guidelines advise that samples should be analysed within 4 hours of production. Postal testing, where there is a delay in analysis, may not be as accurate at detecting sperm. At present there are no other options for semen analysis testing currently available for vasectomy patients in NHS Lothian.