Post-vasectomy sperm counts: frequently-asked questions

How should the specimen be produced?
Produce the specimen at home after at least 3 days of abstinence from sexual activity. The semen should be produced by masturbation (i.e. by hand) into the plastic container provided. You must not use a condom to collect the semen and the entire sample must be collected.

The first specimen should be produced 16 weeks after your vasectomy operation and the second 2-4 weeks after the first (i.e. 18-20 weeks post-operatively).

Always use the specimen containers provided. Do not collect your sample in a glass container because the silica in glass tends to destroy sperms and may give a false-negative result.

What should I do once the specimen has been produced?
1. Fill in the date and time of production and the days since your last ejaculation on the request form. This is essential for accurate assessment.

2. Check that the container is clearly marked with your name and date of birth.

PLEASE NOTE: If the details on either the form or container are not complete, the laboratory will not accept the sample and you may need to bring another one to the laboratory at a later stage.

Where do I take the specimen?
It is best if you bring the specimen yourself to the Cytology Laboratory at Addenbrooke’s; this can be found on Level 5 (Histopathology). The laboratory block is
on the left of the main hospital drive, between the Accident & Emergency Department and the Main Entrance.

It is best if you bring the specimen yourself to Hinchingbrooke Hospital. Please leave your sample at the Specimen Reception desk in the main laboratory block.

**How soon does the specimen need to be delivered?**
The specimen MUST be brought to the hospital within 1 hour of production. During the journey, it should be kept warm (e.g. in an inside pocket or under your arm) but avoid excessive heating or chilling which may invalidate the test.

The laboratory is only open to receive specimens between 08.30hr and 15.30hr on weekdays; it is not open at weekends. Specimens received outside these hours cannot be processed and will be discarded; in this event, you will then need to provide another sample at a later date.

The laboratory is only open to receive specimens between 09.00hr and 16.45hr on weekdays; it is not open at weekends. Specimens received outside these hours cannot be processed and will be discarded; in this event, you will then need to provide another sample at a later date.

**How will I know about the results?**
If these are your first samples, we require the results of both samples to determine whether you are sterile. You will be informed of the results by post but you will not hear anything until two samples have been processed.

If there are still some sperms present after your vasectomy, and this is seen in 20% of patients after vasectomy, you will be advised to perform further counts until we have received two, consecutive, clear specimens from you or you are found to have consistently less than 10,000 non-motile sperms per ml of semen.

**Who can I contact for more help or information?**

**Oncology Nurses**
- Uro-Oncology Nurse Specialist  
  01223 586748
- Bladder cancer Nurse Practitioner (haematuria, chemotherapy & BCG)  
  01223 274608
- Prostate cancer Nurse Practitioner  
  01223 274608 or 216897 or bleep 154-548
- Surgical Care Practitioner  
  01223 348590 or 256157 or bleep 154-351

**Non-Oncology Nurses**
- Urology Nurse Practitioner (incontinence, urodynamics, catheter patients)
01223 274608 or 586748 or bleep 157-237

- Urology Nurse Practitioner (stoma care)
  01223 349800
- Urology Nurse Practitioner (stone disease)
  01223 349800 or bleep 152-879

Patient Advice & Liaison Centre (PALS)

- Telephone
  +44 (0)1223 216756 or 257257
  +44 (0)1223 274432 or 274431
- Patient Line
  *801 (from patient bedside telephones only)
- E mail
  pals@addenbrookes.nhs.uk
- Mail
  PALS, Box No 53
  Addenbrooke's Hospital
  Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 2QQ

Chaplaincy and Multi-Faith Community

- Telephone
  +44 (0)1223 217769
- E mail
  chaplaincy@addenbrookes.nhs.uk
- Mail
  The Chaplaincy, Box No 105
  Addenbrooke's Hospital
  Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 2QQ

MINICOM System ("type" system for the hard of hearing)

- Telephone
  +44 (0)1223 217589

Access Office (travel, parking & security information)

- Telephone
  +44 (0)1223 596060

Other information
This patient information leaflet provides input from specialists, the British Association of Urological Surgeons, the Department of Health and evidence-based sources as a supplement to any advice you may already have been given by your GP. Alternative treatments can be discussed in more detail with your urologist or Specialist Nurse.
How can I get information in alternative formats?
Please ask if you require this information in other languages, large print or audio format: 01223 216032 or patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

**Polish**
Informacje te można otrzymać w innych językach, w wersji dużym drukiem lub audio. Zamówienia prosimy składać pod numerem: 01223 216032 lub wysyłając e-mail: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

**Portuguese**
Se precisar desta informação num outro idioma, em impressão de letras grandes ou formato áudio por favor telefone para o 01223 216032 ou envie uma mensagem para: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

**Russian**
Если вам требуется эта информация на другом языке, крупным шрифтом или в аудиоформате, пожалуйста, обращайтесь по телефону 01223 216032 или на вебсайт patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

**Cantonese**
若你需要此信息的其他語言版本、大字體版或音頻格式，請致電 01223 216032 或發郵件到: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

**Turkish**
Bu bilgii diger dillerde veya büyük baskılı ya da sesli formatta isterseniz lütfen su numaradan kontak kurun: 01223 216032 veya asagidaki adrese e-posta gönderin: patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

**Bengali**
এই তথ্য বাংলায়, বড় অক্ষরে বা অডিও টেপে পেতে চাইলে টেলিফন করুন 01223 216032 নং থেকে ফোন করুন
বা patient.information@addenbrookes.nhs.uk থেকে ই-মেইল করুন।

---

Addenbrooke’s is smoke-free. You cannot smoke anywhere on the site. Smoking increases the severity of some urological diseases and increases the risk of post-operative complications. For advice on quitting, contact your GP or the NHS smoking helpline free on 0800 169 0 169

---

**Document history**

- **Author(s):** Nikesh Thiruchelvam (on behalf of the Consultant Urologists)
- **Department:** Department of Urology, Box No 43
  Addenbrooke’s Hospital
  Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
  Hills Road
  Cambridge, CB2 2QQ
  www.addenbrookes.org.uk
- **Contact number:** 01223 216575
- **Fax number:** 01223 216069
- **Dept website:** www.camurology.org.uk
- **First published:** May 2005
- **Review date:** April 2017
- **File name:** Post-vasectomy sperm counts
- **Version number:** 7.0
- **Ref:** 18/Info_04_14