



PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

RETROGRADE EJACULATION ANALYSIS

This leaflet has been written to provide you with important information on your upcoming retrograde ejaculation analysis appointment.

WHAT IS RETROGRADE EJACULATION?

Retrograde ejaculation means that instead of semen being released through the urethra and out of the penis during ejaculation, it is pushed back into the bladder. This can result in little to no semen being released during sexual activity and cloudy urine after sex. While retrograde ejaculation does not necessarily mean a lack of sperm, it can impact fertility as the semen and sperm are not deposited in the vagina for fertilisation.

Sperm can be retrieved from the urine after orgasm and a diagnostic analysis may be carried out on the retrieved sperm. Urine is toxic to sperm; therefore, this must be performed as soon as possible. Sodium Bicarbonate is sometimes used to neutralise the effects of urine on any sperm that may be present.

When the 'antegrade' ejaculate is examined (if produced), the following will be looked at:

- Volume – the amount of ejaculate produced (in mL).
- Viscosity – how thick or thin the fluid is.
- pH – how acidic or alkaline the sample is.
- Sperm Motility – the way sperm moves (sperm are the cells that are needed for fertilisation).
- Sperm Concentration – the number of sperm in the ejaculate (reported as millions per millilitre).
- Sperm Morphology – the size and shape of the sperm (reported as percentage normal forms).

When the urine is examined, the following will be looked at:

- Volume – the amount of urine produced (in mL).
- pH – how acidic or alkaline the sample is.
- The presence or absence of sperm in the sample.

There are other factors that may be examined if required, but these may not always be needed on every sample:

- Non-sperm cells: these are cells which are not sperm and can be white blood cells or immature sperm cells.
- Vitality: this examines whether sperm are dead or alive (reported as percentage live sperm).

ARRANGING YOUR APPOINTMENT

If you have been asked to take this test by your General Practitioner (GP) we will send out an appointment in the post and on our MyMFT system (if you have signed up to this application). You will be asked to provide a fresh sample in one of the private production rooms we have available, for this test we require you to pass the sample onsite.

For any queries, directions or to change your appointment please call the department on 0161 276 6473 between 12:00 – 15:00 (Monday to Friday).

Or you may email the laboratory on mft.andrology.lab@nhs.net and we will get back to you within 2 working days.

Please note we do not provide pornographic magazines, but you may bring your own material if you wish. Wi-Fi will not support certain websites; therefore, we would advise downloading your own material for use on the day if required.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT

Once you know your appointment date and time, you will also be advised whether you need to attend a Sodium Bicarbonate clinic.

Sodium Bicarbonate can be consumed orally in a drink and helps neutralise the acidic urine that the sperm is in. By neutralising the urine, the urine should have less of a negative impact on the sperm and help retain the sperm's motility and viability.

Please do not ejaculate for at least 2 days before producing your sample, and no longer than 7 days.

If you do attend a Sodium Bicarbonate clinic, you will be informed about what you will need to do at your Sodium Bicarbonate clinic appointment, and there will be the opportunity to ask any questions to our clinical healthcare scientists. Generally, this process involves dissolving Sodium Bicarbonate tablets in a glass of water and drinking it around 45 minutes before your appointment time but please wait until you have spoken to our team. Please note that not all patients will be suitable for the use of Sodium Bicarbonate.

If you do not need to attend a Sodium Bicarbonate clinic, on the day of your appointment, please empty your bladder one hour before your appointment.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COLLECTING YOUR SAMPLE

On the day of your appointment, you will produce your sample onsite at our hospital in one of our production rooms using masturbation.

Please follow these instructions carefully as anything outside of the guidance can impact on your results.

- You should not ejaculate (either through masturbation or intercourse) for between 48 hours and 7 days before the appointment. This is important as it can impact sperm numbers.
- You will be provided with a health questionnaire to complete some sections before you produce your sample. This is to support interpretation of your semen results. Some sections must be completed after your sample is collected.

- Wash your hands with soap and water, drying fully afterwards.
- You should only produce the sample by masturbation into a container that we have provided (other containers can kill sperm).
- **Do not use lubrication or a condom to produce your sample as this can kill sperm.**
 - **If you need lubrication, please ask a member of the team to provide you with some that will not kill sperm.**
- You will be provided with two types of labelled specimen containers. The smaller container can be used to collect any semen that may be produced, the larger specimen containers are to collect your urine after masturbation, please use as many containers as necessary to empty your bladder.
- Label the sample containers with your first name, last name, date of birth and the date/time the sample was produced.
- Ensure that the lid is screwed on to the container properly.
- Place the container into the bag provided.
- Ensure the questionnaire is completed and sample is handed to a member of the andrology team.

If you feel you may have any difficulties producing your sample (maybe due to anxiety, medications, or other health issues), please contact the Andrology team and discuss this prior to your attendance so that we can advise you. If you would prefer to speak to someone face-to-face, please let the team know when you attend your appointment.

WHAT CAN IMPACT YOUR RESULTS?

There are many things that can influence semen analysis results, some are out of your control and others you can influence. The section on how to collect your semen sample outlines some of the things in your control. Other influences not mentioned in that section are given below. Please just let us know of anything, even if it is not given in the list below, as we need to be able to interpret your results adequately.

- **Illnesses:** certain illnesses can impact the ability of the testicles to produce sperm or the quality of the sperm. If you have had an illness that has caused a high temperature in the last 3 – 6 months, this includes cold and flu. All illnesses should be written on the request form. For example, diabetes, hypertension.
- **Medications:** certain medications can impact ejaculatory, erectile and testicular function. Please let us know of all the medications you may be taking.
- **Recreational drugs:** this can include cannabis, cocaine, opiates etc. These may impact sperm quality.
- **Performance enhancing drugs:** the most common include anabolic steroids, testosterone, anti-oestrogens, selective androgen receptor modulators (SARMs). These can impact sperm production and hormone levels in the brain.
- **Smoking/Alcohol:** although evidence can be limited, excessive alcohol consumption

can impact liver function and sperm quality. Smoking may also affect sperm quality and cause DNA damage in these cells.

Please do not add anything to your sample including lubricants/oil as this will affect the results.

Rejection of samples:

- Samples that are not labelled correctly.
- Samples where your details cannot be verified.

RESULTS OF TEST

Results will be sent to the healthcare professional that referred you within **7 – 10 working days**. If you are a patient being cared for under the Department of Reproductive Medicine, you will receive your results at your follow-up clinic/consultation appointment.

If you have signed up to MyMFT, you may receive your results electronically. There are limitations to these results and some information may be missing. If you need any help with the results, please contact the Andrology team or the doctor looking after you.

Some patients may be offered an appointment with a Healthcare Professional (HCP) following a semen analysis. This will be discussed with you during the appointment.

We do not routinely give results to patients, although we can support your healthcare professional with clinical advice if required. If you have any issues, contact us via Email or telephone.

There are other factors that may be examined but if this happens, your referring healthcare professional will tell you what has been looked at.

HOW TO FIND US

The andrology department is in Old Saint Mary's Hospital (not the new building), within the Department of Reproductive Medicine on the first floor.

The address of the department is given below:

**Andrology Laboratories
Old Saint Mary's Hospital
Oxford Road
Manchester
M13 0JH**

Opening hours for enquiries:

Monday to Friday – 08.00 am to 04.00 pm.

We are not open on Saturdays, Sundays, or on Bank Holidays.

More information on how to get here and other details such as car parking can be found on the website – <https://mft.nhs.uk/saint-marys/>

Please come to the main entrance and press the intercom (if the door is locked). If the door is open, proceed to the first floor and press the bell outside Andrology reception.

For disabled access, please telephone the department in advance (0161 276 6473). We have a

separate entrance just off Oxford Road. Please press the intercom on arrival.

PRIVACY POLICY

Details of our privacy policy can be found on our website: <https://mft.nhs.uk/saint-marys/services/gynaecology/reproductive-medicine/andrology/>

COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

If you have any compliments or complaints, please contact our department or Trust patient advice and liaison service (PALS). PALS information can be found here:
<https://mft.nhs.uk/saint-marys/pals/>

TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION SERVICES

It is our policy that family, relatives or friends cannot interpret for patients. Should you require an interpreter ask a member of staff in advance of your appointment.

CONTACT DETAILS

 0161 276 6473

 mft.andrology.lab@nhs.net or andrology.lab@mft.nhs.uk

 <https://mft.nhs.uk/saint-marys/services/gynaecology/reproductive-medicine/andrology/>