

Post-vasectomy semen analysis (PVSA)

Introduction

Vasectomy is a simple, safe and effective procedure with few failures. However, you may not be sterile right after surgery. This is because sperm cells can remain within the male reproductive tract. Until all of these sperm cells have been ejaculated, you will still be fertile. The appearance of sperm cells is dependent upon time, patient age and sexual activity. It usually takes a minimum of 20 ejaculations after vasectomy for sperm to disappear. Studies show that around 95% of men will be sperm free by six months after vasectomy. However, this can range anywhere from 3-6 months or longer. **You should continue to use some form of birth control until your health care provider confirms that all sperm have disappeared from your semen.** Only when it is confirmed by a PVSA that no sperm are present can you be sure that the surgery has been a success.

Special clearance

A few men will continue to have low numbers of sperm in their semen for many months. This is a result of a very slow loss of sperm from the reproductive tract.

Persistent non-motile sperm in the ejaculate up to and beyond one year is seen in about 5% of men.

While not impossible to begin pregnancy, the likelihood is extremely low. In other words, the chance of being fertile is minimal rather than zero. When these low numbers of non-motile sperm persist, your health care provider may give you special clearance.

Special clearance

Your semen specimen that you collect will be used for the PVSA. It will be examined for the presence of sperm cells. To submit a specimen you should be aware of the following:

- You must schedule an appointment with the Andrology Laboratory by calling (570) 271-5620.
- The container into which the specimen is collected must be sterile. **Only containers approved by the Andrology Lab can be used for specimen collection.** Specimens brought to the Lab in any other container will be rejected and no test performed!

- The semen sample should be collected by masturbation, without using lubricant.
- Collect the entire ejaculate into the sterile container. The greatest numbers of sperm cells are found in the first part of the ejaculate, and extreme care should be taken not to lose this portion. You will be asked if any portion of the specimen was lost or spilled during collection.
- To avoid the need to submit multiple semen specimens, submit the first specimen between 8-10 weeks after your surgery and after a minimum of 20 ejaculates. If sperm cells are seen in your specimen, you should wait a minimum of four weeks before scheduling another PVSA.
- If you are to receive Special clearance and the specimen was collected at home, the specimen must be delivered to the lab within one hour of collection. It must be kept at room or body temperature (no heat or cold). This is needed so we can look for the presence of motile sperm cells.

(continued)

A specimen can be collected at home or at the fertility center.

- After the sample is collected, screw the lid on tight and print your name clearly on the label.
- Place the container into the “BIOHAZARD” bag provided. Follow the directions printed on the bag. You should then place the Biohazard Bag in another bag for transport to the hospital.
- Your specimen can not be accepted unless you have an appointment.
- **You must deliver the specimen directly to a technologist in the Andrology Lab. Specimens can not be delivered to the receptionist or left at the lab without speaking to the technologist.**

Reporting of results

You will receive a letter from your health care provider within a few weeks reporting the result of your PVSA. If you want the results earlier you can call your physician directly. The Andrology Lab can not report the results of your PVSA directly to you.

The Andrology Lab is located inside the Fertility Center in the Women’s Pavilion. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please call the Andrology Lab at (570) 271-5620.

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