

Retrograde Ejaculation Analysis

You have been asked to provide a sample or samples by your doctor to investigate whether you have retrograde ejaculation. It is very important that you read the entire leaflet very carefully and contact the laboratory if you have any further questions, on 0121 424 9717.

Why have I been asked to produce a semen sample?

This is so your doctor can see if there is a possibility that you have retrograde ejaculation. Retrograde ejaculation is where semen goes into the bladder instead of through the penis and is often referred to as a 'dry orgasm'. The test will require you to masturbate until you feel as though you have ejaculated, collect any semen (if produced) and then provide a separate urine sample immediately afterwards. The semen and urine will be examined by the Andrology Laboratory.

If semen is produced, staff will assess the sperm for:

- The **number** present (how many there are)
- The **motility** (how well they move or 'swim')
- The **morphology** (what they look like under the microscope)
- Other parameters assessed will include the semen viscosity (how thick or thin the sample is), semen pH (how acidic or alkali the sample is) and seminal volume (the amount produced)

If urine is produced, staff will analyse this to assess:

- If sperm are present in the urine
- If sperm are present, the number of sperm will be assessed
- The motility of sperm (how well they move or 'swim')
- Other parameters will include pH (how acidic or alkali the sample is) and volume (the amount produced)

What will I need to do to prepare for my test?

You will need to make sure that you can attend the appointment that you have been given or arranged.

You should contact your doctor to discuss the possibility of being prescribed an alkalinising agent, such as sodium bicarbonate. This is important as taking this on the day of your test will prevent the urine from killing sperm. Please consult with your doctor before taking any new medication. If you cannot take this agent, we will still test your sample but we will not be able to assess motility. Please follow the instructions from your doctor on how to take the sodium bicarbonate.

Prior to the test you must ensure that you have not ejaculated for **at least 2 days (48 hours) before the test, but for no longer than 7 days (168 hours)**.

On the day of the appointment please arrive at the location given five minutes before your appointment time. Please bring your questionnaire with you having completed as much of the questionnaire as possible at home.

Information for Patients

Location:

Andrology Department, Good Hope Hospital, 1st Floor Sheldon Unit, Rectory Road, Sutton Coldfield, B75 7RR

Opening Hours of the Laboratory:

Monday to Friday: 08:00 – 16:00
Saturdays: Ad-hoc (clinics do not routinely run on a Saturday - times vary)
Sunday: Closed

Laboratory Tel: 0121 424 9717

When you arrive on the 1st Floor, please go directly to the Andrology Department which is situated near Ophthalmology (turn right after the reception desk), and press the bell located outside the door. Wait until a member of the Andrology team greets you and takes you to a designated private room for you to produce your sample.

They will explain the steps you need to follow and give you a semen sample pot and urine collection container before they leave you alone.

Where will I produce my sample(s)?

To assure your privacy during your visit, the Andrology department has a dedicated and private room for you to produce your sample. The room is set back from the main corridor and housed within a secure and separate area.

How do I produce my sample(s)?

Once you have been left alone to produce your sample, please ensure that you follow these instructions carefully:

1. Check that the labels on the semen container and on the urine, container have your details clearly written on them. If there is anything incorrect, please change accordingly or highlight this to the staff member.
2. If you have not already done so, please wash your hands and penis with soap and water and rinse thoroughly to remove all traces of soap. Finally, please ensure that your hands and penis are dried thoroughly.
3. Go to the toilet and urinate a little, so your bladder is partly empty. There is a toilet in the private room for you to use.
4. Masturbate to orgasm and collect any semen that may be produced into the sample container with the word '**semen**' written on the top. It is important that you do not use any form of lubrication or any other product whilst doing this unless provided to you by the laboratory. If no semen is produced then this pot will be discarded by the Andrology Team. Please do not worry if you do not produce semen as this rarely happens if you have retrograde ejaculation. Continue on to point 4.
 - a. Replace the lid onto the container, ensuring that it is appropriately fitted to prevent leakage.

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- b. Place the sample into the incubator (a small metal/glass unit located in the room) closing the door securely once your sample is inside.
5. Once you have ejaculated (or felt the sensation of orgasm), urinate into the urine container with the word '**urine**' written on the top. Collect all the urine as this will help the laboratory give your doctor meaningful results. Place the lid on to the container ensuring that it is fitted securely. Place the container next to incubator.
6. Wash and dry your hands.
7. Take a few moments to answer all the questions on the questionnaire and sign/date the declaration.
8. Press the bell located in the room by the door and wait inside the room with your questionnaire. A member of the team will check your questionnaire and go through a second form required for retrograde samples. This will involve a few short questions and then staff will show you out of the department.

Please note there are no electronic audio-visual facilities provided by the Trust. If you require this, you will need to provide this discreetly yourself. There is however a selection of adult images (magazines).

What if I cannot produce my sample(s) on site at the hospital?

Please do not worry. We understand that this may happen and staff within the Andrology department will be able to talk to you about this.

Can I produce my sample(s) off-site?

This is not an option for retrograde analysis due to the timing required for sample analysis.

What may affect my results?

There are numerous factors that may contribute to the outcome of the test. The list below describes why some of these are important:

- Not obtaining (or being unable to use following GP advice) an alkalinising agent or following the instructions to take this prior to your appointment. This will mean that if sperm are found in the urine sample, we will not be able to assess the motility.
- Abstinence period – if you have not abstained from ejaculating for the requested time period (2-7 days) then this may affect the sperm numbers and the motility in extreme cases. **If you fail to adhere to this, you may be asked for a repeat sample to be produced.**
- Completeness of sample(s) – we must know whether you have collected the entire sample or not. Incomplete samples can cause an underestimation of sperm numbers. **You may be asked for a repeat sample if you fail to collect the entire ejaculate/urine.**
- Use of products/water etc. to produce sample – chemicals and water may be toxic to sperm causing a decrease in motility and vitality (whether sperm are alive or dead). We advise against the use of any substance to produce your sample, unless provided to you by the laboratory (ask staff if you require a lubricant for production).

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- The use of a non-spermicidal condom – the use of these special laboratory provided condoms will not harm sperm but they may affect the volume of your sample. Other condoms are **not permitted** and will result in the laboratory rejecting your semen sample.
- Recent illness and medication – some illnesses and medications may cause harm to the body's process of producing sperm. This can have multiple effects and so we need to know of any episodes within the previous 2-3 months that you can remember. Any medication you are on may have an impact on the investigations and the outcome of your visit. Please have the names of any medication you are on with you.
- Sample Containers - only laboratory provided containers should be used. **The use of any non-laboratory provided containers will mean we will reject your sample.**

Please remember that we need to know about anything mentioned above as we want you to have the most accurate report possible. Staff are available should you wish to discuss these with them in private.

When will I receive my results?

This will depend on who referred you for this test. If it is your GP, then they will be given the results within 7-10 days. If you were asked to do this by a hospital consultant then you will usually get your results at your next appointment.

Please note that the laboratory will not give results directly to patients.

If I cannot attend my appointment or I am delayed, what shall I do?

If you cannot make your appointment, please contact our Appointment Centre on **0121 424 1234** or discuss issues with the andrology team. Appointments can be brought forward if available or moved later if required, so please do contact us.

Please note car parking facilities are difficult and you will need to give sufficient time to find a space if you are driving here. Please contact the laboratory on **0121 424 9717** if you feel that you may be late, but:

Late arrivals may not be seen by the Andrology Team. Please be aware that we reserve the right to do this, as the tests are time-dependant and we must ensure that the integrity of other samples are not compromised.

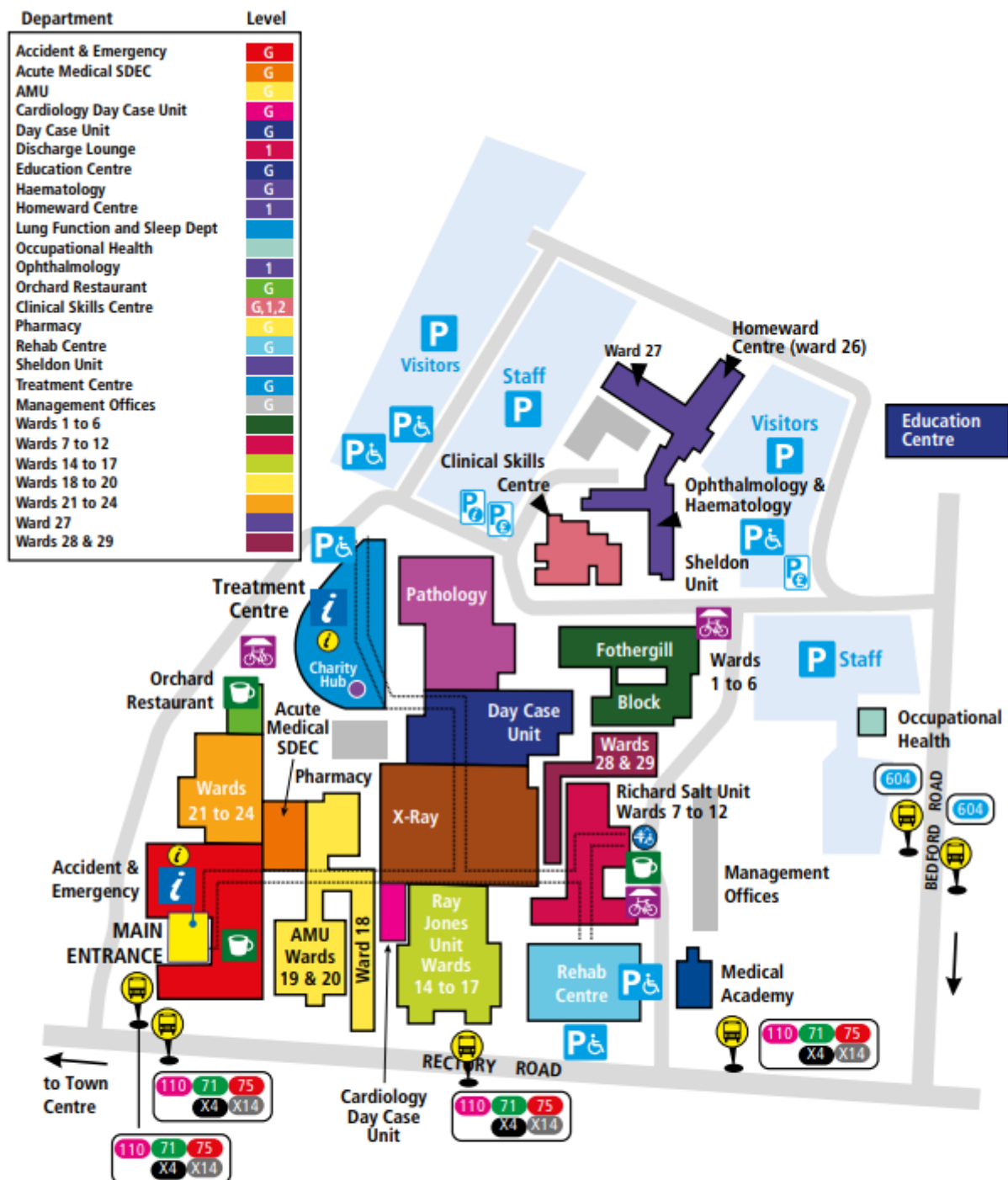
Note: Patients who fail to attend their appointment and do not notify the Trust will need a repeat referral from their GP/Consultant and will be placed at the end of the waiting list.

What if I want to comment or complain about my experience?

Please either contact the laboratory or telephone PALS on 0121 424 0808.

Information for Patients

Map of Good Hope Hospital



Correct at 6 June 2024

Key to symbols



Bus stop



Travel information screen



Information/Reception



Car park



Disabled car parking spaces



Car park info hut



Car park pay machine



Cycle shelter



Coffee shop/Restaurant



Changing Places toilet

Information for Patients

References

- WHO. WHO Laboratory Manual for the Examination and Processing of Human Semen. 6th Edn. Geneva: World Health Organisation (2021).
- Association of Biomedical Andrologists (ABA) (2012). Laboratory andrology, guidelines for good practice. Version 3, ABA Executive Committee.
- Bjorndahl, L. et al. A practical guide to basic laboratory andrology. Cambridge University Press, 2010. ISBN 978-0-521-73590

Accessibility

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