



## Diagnostic Semen Analysis

You have been asked to provide a semen sample by your doctor to investigate the quality of your sperm. 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 or [Andrology@uhb.nhs.uk](mailto:Andrology@uhb.nhs.uk).

### Why have I been asked to produce a semen sample?

This is generally so your doctor can see if there may be problems with the quality of your sperm for fertility purposes and manage your investigations accordingly. Sperm (when produced) are mixed with other fluids which is collectively called semen. There may be other reasons for this test which should have been explained to you by a Healthcare Professional (HCP).

### Semen samples are analysed by trained staff to assess:

- The **number of sperm** present (how many there are)
- The **motility of sperm** (how well they move or 'swim')
- The **morphology of sperm** (size and shape seen under the microscope)
- Other parameters; viscosity, pH, volume etc.,

It is important to remember that a single semen analysis offers a snap shot of semen quality and you may be asked for a second sample by your doctor if they feel this is necessary.

### 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. 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.

### Location:

**Andrology Department, Good Hope Hospital, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Sheldon Unit, Sutton Coldfield, B75 7RR.** There is a map of Good Hope Hospital near the end of this leaflet.

### Opening Hours of the Laboratory:

<b>Monday to Friday</b>	<b>08:00 – 16:00</b>
<b>Saturdays</b>	<b>Ad-hoc (clinics do not routinely run on a Saturday - times vary)</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Closed</b>
<b>Laboratory Tel</b>	<b>0121 424 9717</b>
<b>Email</b>	<b><a href="mailto:uhb-tr.andrology@nhs.net">uhb-tr.andrology@nhs.net</a> or <a href="mailto:Andrology@uhb.nhs.uk">Andrology@uhb.nhs.uk</a></b>

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When you arrive on the 1st Floor of the Sheldon Unit Good Hope Hospital, please go directly to the Andrology Department which is situated **near Ophthalmology (turn right after the Ophthalmology reception desk)**, go through the double doors and head to the door under the blue 'Andrology Department' sign at the end of the corridor. 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 sample pot before they leave you alone.

### Where will I produce my sample?

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?

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

1. Check that the label on the pot has your correct information written clearly and accurately. If there is anything incorrect, please change accordingly.
2. If 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. Masturbate and collect any semen that is produced into the pot. It is important that you do not use any form of lubrication or any other product whilst doing this unless it has been provided to you by the laboratory.
4. You must only collect one ejaculate into the pot, regardless of the volume or if you lose any of the sample.
5. Replace the lid onto the container, ensuring that it is appropriately fitted to prevent leakage.
6. Place the sample into the incubator (a small metal/glass unit located in the room) closing the door securely once your sample is inside.
7. Wash and dry your hands.
8. Take a few moments to answer all the questions on the questionnaire and sign/date the declaration.
9. Press the bell, unlock the door and wait inside the room with your questionnaire. A member of the team will review your questionnaire with you which may involve a few short questions. You can ask any questions before they 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).**

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### What if I cannot produce my sample 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. If you wish to discuss this prior to your attendance, please telephone the laboratory.

### Can I bring anyone with me?

Due to the availability of space and the restrictions in place, you are only permitted to bring one adult with you. No children will be allowed to attend the appointment with you. If you need to bring a child with you then they must stay in the waiting room, and you will need to bring another responsible adult to look after them. If there is more than one person with you, we may have to cancel your appointment. We may ask permission to speak to you in front of the person that attends with you; this is for confidentiality so please do not be offended. Only Trust provided interpreters will be used if you cannot speak very good English.

### Producing my sample off-site

This must be agreed with laboratory staff prior to your appointment. You must have a pot provided to you from the laboratory. If this has been agreed, then you must:

- Produce your sample into the pot provided to you by the laboratory.
- Keep the sample warm by holding it close to your body.
- Bring to the laboratory for your appointment time **within 45 minutes** of production and as close to your appointment time as possible (within 15 minutes either side of the time).

### 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:

- 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. **If you fail to adhere to this you may be asked to produce a second sample in the future.**
- Completeness of sample – 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 second sample in the future if you fail to collect the entire ejaculate.**
- 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 sample production).
- The use of other methods of sample collection – we advise the production of semen by masturbation or use of a non-spermicidal condom. If other methods are used i.e., oral stimulation or 'withdrawal' then this may lead to contamination of the sample and affect the results.
- 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 sample.
- Delayed delivery of a sample produced off-site – if you have taken the option of producing your sample off site, failure to bring this to the laboratory within 45 minutes may affect sperm motility. We will also be unable to conduct other tests which would normally be carried out,

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therefore **samples delivered that will breach 60 minutes by the time we analyse the sample will be rejected**. We recommend on-site production for accuracy of results but please feel free to discuss this with the laboratory.

- Temperature – this will not be an issue if producing your sample on-site, but if you are going to be bringing your sample in from home, we do ask that you keep the sample warm by placing it close to your body. If you do not keep it at body temperature, then the sperm motility can be severely affected.
- 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 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. **Any non-laboratory provided pots will mean we will reject your sample.**
- Lifestyle – many factors may influence semen quality including lifestyle. We will ask you to complete some information so that we can interpret your results correctly. If you take any recreational drugs, anabolic steroids or supplements, please ensure this is written down.

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 was your GP, then they will be sent the results within 7-10 days. If you were referred to us 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 rescheduled, so please do contact us. However, this depends on the referral and if your GP/Consultant has requested a particular date for your test.

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.**

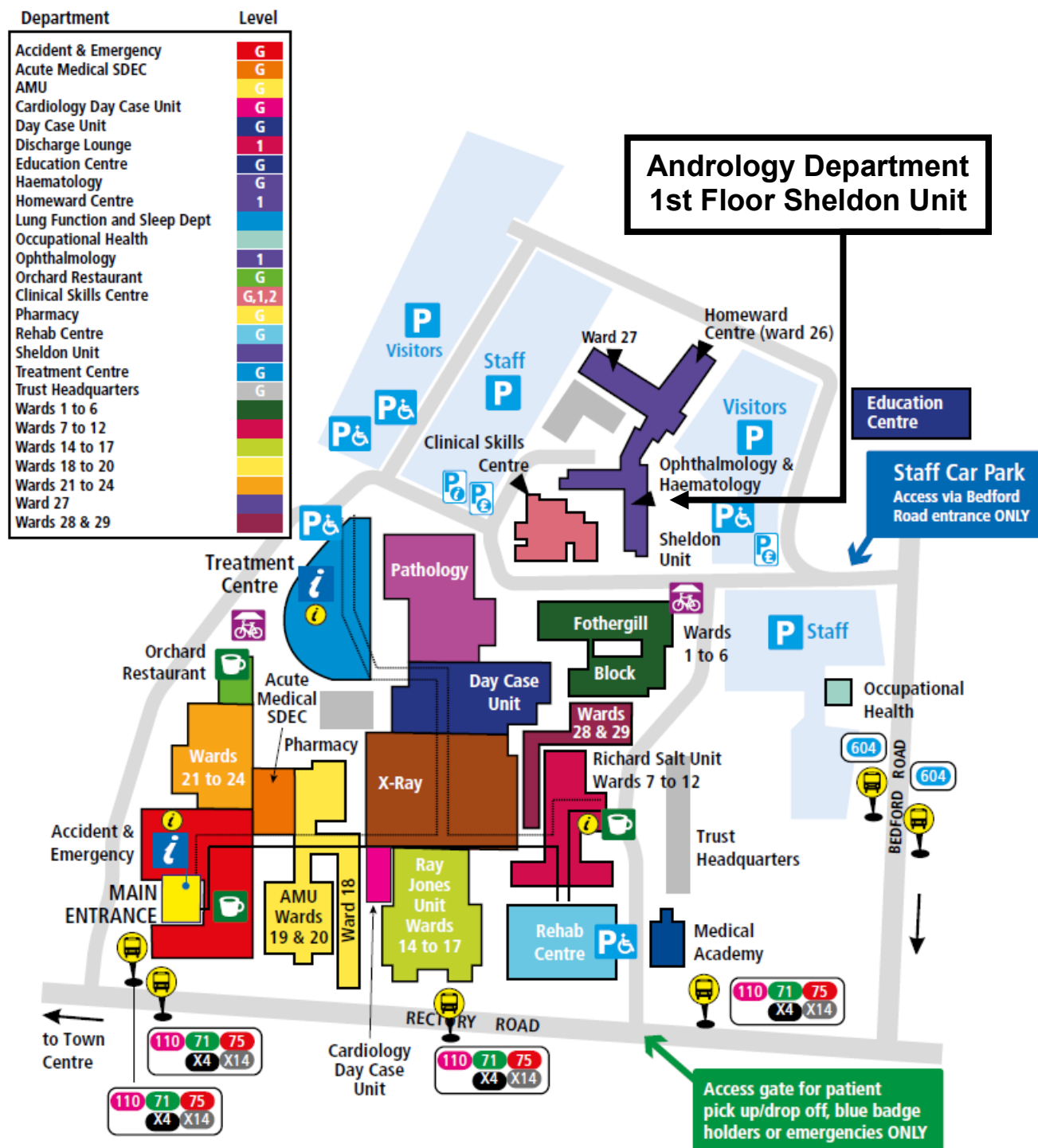
**Note: Patients who fail to attend their appointment and do not notify the Trust will need a repeat referral from their GP/Consultant and will be placed at the end of the waiting list.**

### 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



### Key to symbols

	Bus stop		Car park		Cycle shelter
	Travel information screen		Disabled car parking spaces		Coffee shop/Restaurant
	Information/Reception		Car park info hut		Road works
			Car park pay machine		

### 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. Mortimer, D. Barratt, CLR. Castilla, JA. Menkveld, R. Kvist, U. Algarez JG. A practical guide to basic laboratory andrology. Cambridge University Press, 2010. ISBN 978-0-521-73590

If you require this information in another format, such as a different language, large print, braille or audio version please ask a member of staff or email [interpreting.service@uhb.nhs.uk](mailto:interpreting.service@uhb.nhs.uk).