



# ***A guide to semen analysis***

***Information for patients***

**Fertility Centre  
Aberdeen Maternity Hospital**



All couples attending the Fertility Centre will be asked to submit semen samples for analysis. This guide is to provide you with information on what we look for when assessing a sample and what that may mean for you.

This booklet is intended as a guide only. If you have any other questions, please ask the doctors.

### ***Why have semen analysis carried out?***

Those attending the Fertility Centre are seen as a couple and we assess the fertility of both partners. The easiest way of assessing male fertility is to analyse a sample of semen.

Even if you have already fathered a child we will still analyse your semen as male fertility can change. This may be due to age, illness or a change in lifestyle, therefore it is important for us to assess your **current** fertility.

### ***What can I do to improve my fertility?***

Fertility can be affected by many things. You should consider whether small changes to your lifestyle may make a significant difference to your chances of conceiving. The most publicised factors are weight, exercise, smoking and alcohol consumption. You should also think about stress, recent illness, long-term prescribed medication and the taking of illegal drugs. All of these are known to affect male fertility.

### ***Where will the semen analysis be carried out?***

All semen analyses are carried out in the Andrology Laboratory which is part of the Fertility Centre. You will find the Laboratory on the second floor of the Maternity Hospital (above the Fertility Centre). Your GP can arrange this so that a result is available for your first appointment at the Fertility Clinic.

### ***How many samples will I have to bring in?***

We ask most men to produce one sample for analysis. You must **not** have sexual intercourse or masturbate for at least three days but no longer than seven days before producing that sample for the results to be meaningful.

There are some times when a second sample may be needed. If this is the case, the doctor will let you know.

### ***What does semen analysis mean?***

The laboratory staff try to find out as much as possible about your samples so that we can best assess your fertility.

The results provide information about:

<b>Volume</b>	how much semen you produce
<b>Density</b>	how many sperm are present per millilitre of semen
<b>Motility</b>	how many sperm are moving and how quickly they are moving
<b>Morphology</b>	how many sperm are of normal shape and size

The results will also note if the semen is unusually thick (viscous), if there is a tendency for the sperm to stick together (agglutination) or if there are significant numbers of other cells present.

### ***How will I get my results?***

The results of your semen analysis will be sent to the doctor who gave you the Semen Analysis Request Form.

If your GP requested the test, you should contact your GP practice about 10 days after you handed in your sample to get your results.

If the Fertility Clinic or the Assisted Reproduction Unit requested the test, the doctor will give you the results at your next appointment. You should make sure that you allow at least 7 days between the test and your clinic appointment.

### ***How will I know if my sample is normal or not?***

It is very difficult to say definitely whether or not a sample is “normal” because there are so many parts to the semen analysis. The World Health Organisation (WHO) provides us with Reference Values which describe “those semen values with which a male is likely to have achieved a pregnancy within a period of 12 months”, but stress that many men with lower values do succeed in having a child of their own.

If your semen analysis results show low values for one or more of the measurements listed above this **does not** mean that you are infertile. It may be that for you the chances of achieving a pregnancy are lower than average or that it may take longer, so please discuss this fully with the doctor at your next appointment. Please remember that the chances of a pregnancy also depend on the fertility of both **you and your partner**.

**Contact telephone number**

If you have any questions about semen analysis please contact:

**Andrology Laboratory  
Aberdeen Fertility Centre**

**☎ (01224) 553211 ☎**

**This leaflet is also available in large print and on computer disk.**

**Other formats and languages can be supplied on request. Please call Quality Development on (01224) 554149 for a copy. Ask for leaflet 0577.**

Feedback from patients helped us to develop this leaflet. If you have any comments or suggestions about how we can improve this leaflet, please let us know.

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