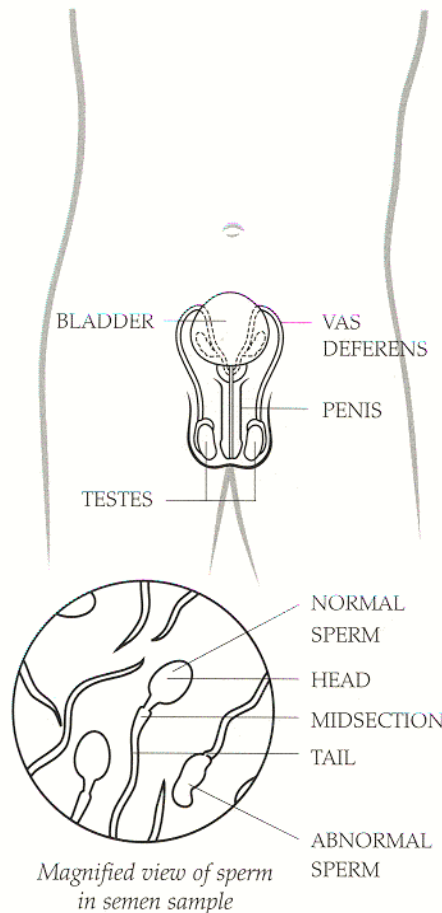


Semen Analysis

A semen analysis is a test that tells your doctor the number of sperm in your semen, whether they are normal, and how well they move.

There are many reasons why couples have trouble achieving pregnancy. A semen analysis is one of the tests your doctor will use to evaluate your problem. Your test results will tell your doctor the number of sperm in your semen (your sperm count), whether they are normal (morphology), and how well they swim (motility). A low sperm count may be caused by certain medications or a medical problem such as a blocked duct, low testosterone level, or a condition in which sperm back up into the bladder. Fever can also reduce sperm count. Some men may have enough sperm, but their sperm may not swim well enough to reach the egg. Also, sperm that are not normal in shape may not be able to penetrate and fertilize the egg. Your doctor can treat many of these problems.



Semen collection

Your doctor will want you to provide a semen sample. The sample is collected by masturbation at your doctor's office in a private, comfortable room. You will be asked to collect your semen in a sterile specimen cup. Another option is to collect your semen at home (during intercourse) in a special condom that you can get from your doctor. You must deliver your sample to the doctor's office within 45 to 60 minutes after collecting it. Speak with your doctor about instructions for transporting the sample to the office. If the results are not normal or the sample is not complete because you missed the container for sperm collection, this test may need to be repeated. Test results often vary, so you may need to do this procedure more than once.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q What does low sperm count mean?

A A low sperm count is fewer than 20 million sperm per milliliter ejaculated. The normal range is between 40 and 300 million sperm per milliliter of ejaculation.

Q What does low motility mean?

A Motility describes the movement of the sperm. Low motility may reduce your chances to conceive, especially if your sperm count is also low. In a normal semen sample, at least half of the sperm have appropriate movement.

Q What does abnormal morphology mean?

A A normal sperm has an oval head, slender midsection, and a tail that moves in a wave-like motion. Sperm that do not have this normal shape may not be able to swim effectively or penetrate the egg.

Q How long must I abstain from sex before the analysis?

A You should abstain from sex for at least 3 days before the analysis, but not longer than 1 week. Check with your doctor to see if there are any other recommendations specific to you.

Q How long does it take to get the results?

A The test results are generally available within a few days.