
This leaflet is for men referred to the Male Fertility Clinic with infertility or subfertility issues and outlines what to expect next.

What is infertility/subfertility?

Infertility is defined as failure to achieve a pregnancy after 12-months of regular unprotected sexual intercourse. Men are usually referred to the Male Fertility Clinic when tests show there is no sperm present (azoospermia) or when two sperm tests three months apart show abnormalities. The four terms most commonly used to describe sperm abnormalities are: 'azoospermia' (the absence of sperm in the ejaculate), 'oligozoospermia' (a low sperm count – usually below 15 million sperm per millilitre of semen), 'asthenozoospermia' (reduced sperm motility), and 'teratozoospermia' (reduced number of normal looking sperm).

How do I get referred to the Male Fertility Clinic?

Suitable candidates can be referred to the clinic by their GP.

What happens in the clinic?

You can expect to have a clinical history taken and the doctor will examine you. You will also likely to have some tests, including hormone levels, a genetic test and imaging such as ultrasound scan, depending on the suspected cause of your abnormal sperm parameters. These are all done to determine the cause of the problem and whether a surgical sperm retrieval can help you.

What is surgical sperm retrieval?

Surgical sperm retrieval is the collection of sperm for fertilisation from the epididymis or testicles for use in assisted conception for couples where the male partner suffers from a sperm abnormality. The retrieved sperm is used immediately for fertilisation or stored for future fertility treatment. At the Royal Berkshire Hospital the surgical sperm retrieval methods available are:

- Testicular Sperm Aspiration (TESA)
- Percutaneous Epididymal Sperm Aspiration (PESA)
- Microsurgical Testicular Sperm Extraction (M-TESE)

Visit <https://www.baus.org.uk/userfiles/pages/files/Patients/Leaflets/Sperm%20retrieval.pdf> for further details on what these methods entail.

Contacting us

Urology Clinical Admin Team (CAT 3a) Tel: 0118 322 8629 or email rbb-tr.CAT3A@nhs.net

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Author: Mr Shafi Wardak, RBFT Urology, December 2022. Next review due: December 2024