

## Special Clearance (Vasectomy)

Assuming that you have been ejaculating regularly after your vasectomy, no sperm should be present in your semen after about 16 weeks. If that is the case, (ie 2 semen samples sent one after another both don't contain any sperm) we can tell you that it is safe to stop using birth control. Some men however, can continue to produce small numbers of non-moving sperms in their semen and may be asked to submit more samples.

### Why has that happened?

Persistent small numbers of non-moving sperms can sometimes be seen in the semen of men who have had a vasectomy, if they haven't ejaculated regularly after the vasectomy, or if sperms were present in the structures above the vasectomy site, (before the vasectomy took place) and didn't quickly pass out into the semen afterwards.

This does not mean that the vasectomy hasn't worked. If that were the case then we would expect to see large numbers of moving sperm.

### What is Special Clearance?

Special clearance (special permission) to stop using additional contraception is offered to patients when a small number of non-moving sperms (less than 10 000 per ml of semen) is observed in a fresh semen analysis sample, at least 7 months after vasectomy.

### What evidence is this information based on?

Medical research has shown that men, who had this small number of non-moving sperms in their ejaculate after a vasectomy and were followed-up, weren't able to get their partners pregnant when they stopped using birth control.

### Is there anything else that I need to know?

At your initial appointment we discussed that vasectomy operations are not always successful and there is always a small failure rate caused by the divided vas ends re-joining. Being offered special clearance doesn't affect this risk in any way and there is still a 1 in 2000 chance that you could get your partner pregnant if the ends happened to re-join in the future.