Fertility Testing: Your Next Steps

Jennifer Almonte, MD, FACOG • Amanda Delgado, MD, FACOG

Your physician has recommended three tests to help understand your fertility: an **HSG** to check your fallopian tubes, **home ovulation testing**, and a **semen analysis** for your partner. This handout explains how to complete each one. Most couples can finish all three within one to two menstrual cycles.

1. Hysterosalpingogram (HSG)

An HSG is an X-ray test done in the radiology department at the hospital. A small amount of contrast dye is placed through the cervix to show whether your fallopian tubes are open and whether the inside of your uterus has a normal shape. The test itself takes about 15 to 30 minutes.

How to schedule

1. **Call our office on the first day of your period.** We will schedule your HSG with the hospital radiology department for you. The first day of full bleeding (not spotting) is Cycle Day 1.
2. **Your HSG must be done between Cycle Day 1 and Cycle Day 10.** We will book your appointment in this window, usually after your bleeding has stopped, and let you know the date, time, and location.
3. **Do not have intercourse from the start of your period until after your HSG.** This makes sure you are not pregnant at the time of the X-ray.

Tips for the day of your test

- Ask us whether to take ibuprofen (such as Advil or Motrin) about 1 hour before the test to ease cramping.
- Mild cramping and light spotting for a day or two afterward are normal.
- Call us if you have fever, severe pain, or foul-smelling discharge after the test.
- Tell us right away if you are allergic to iodine or contrast dye.

2. Home Ovulation Testing (Clearblue Easy Digital Ovulation Test)

This urine test detects the surge of LH, the hormone that triggers ovulation about 24 to 36 hours later. It helps you find your two most fertile days each cycle. You can buy it at most pharmacies without a prescription.

How to use it

1. **Know your cycle length.** Count from the first day of one period to the day before your next period starts.
2. **Start testing 17 days before you expect your next period.** For a 28-day cycle, that is Cycle Day 11. If your cycles vary, use your shortest cycle. If you are not sure, start on Cycle Day 10.
3. **Test once a day at about the same time each day.** Try not to urinate for about 4 hours beforehand, and avoid drinking a lot of fluids before testing.
4. **Read the result.** A **smiley face** means your LH surge has been detected. An empty circle means keep testing tomorrow with a new stick.
5. **Once you see the smiley face, have intercourse that day and the next day.** These are your most fertile days. You can stop testing for that cycle.

> Keep a simple log of the dates you see a smiley face and bring it to your next visit. If you do not get a smiley face after a full cycle of testing, let us know.

Fertility Testing: Your Next Steps

Jennifer Almonte, MD, FACOG • Amanda Delgado, MD, FACOG

3. Semen Analysis for Your Partner (Fellow Home Kit)

About one-third of fertility concerns involve the male partner, so a semen analysis is an important part of every evaluation. Fellow is a mail-in kit that lets your partner collect a sample privately at home. The sample is analyzed in a certified medical laboratory.

How it works

1. **Order the kit at www.meetfellow.com.** The cost is about $199, with shipping both ways included.
2. **Abstain from ejaculation for 2 to 5 days before collecting the sample.** This gives the most accurate results.
3. **Collect the sample at home** using the cup and preservative in the kit. Follow the kit's instructions closely, including which days of the week to collect and ship.
4. **Mail it back the same day** using the prepaid label on the box. It ships overnight to the lab.
5. **Get results by email**, usually within 1 to 2 business days after the lab receives the sample. The report covers sperm count, concentration, motility (movement), shape, and volume.

Please forward the full report to our office so your physician can review it with you at your next visit.

Questions?

Call our office anytime you have questions about these tests. Once all three are complete, we will schedule a visit to review your results together and plan next steps.

Office phone: 956-540-2000