

Post coital test - PCT

What is a Post Coital Test?

A Post Coital Test (PCT) is an investigation which is carried out mid-cycle, usually around day 10 - 12 if you have a 28-day menstrual cycle. The purpose of the test is firstly to assess the woman's cervical mucus and secondly to see how her partner's sperm functions within the mucus.

How do I arrange a PCT?

To arrange a PCT please contact The Fertility and Reproductive Medicine Clinic (0117 9146501) at the beginning of your cycle to make an appointment. You will be contacted by either the specialist fertility nurse (Carrie Pretsell) or Dr Akande to discuss the most appropriate time.

What do we have to do?

The night before your appointment you should have intercourse. If you are scheduled for an evening appointment, then we would advise intercourse on the morning of the appointment.

Can I have a bath?

It is best that you don't have a bath, but do wash or shower.

Is the PCT painful?

The PCT is very similar to a cervical smear test in that the same instrument (a speculum) is used to look at the cervix (neck of the womb). A small sample of mucus is collected from the cervix, which shouldn't cause any discomfort.

How long will it take to receive the results?

You will receive the results approximately 10-15 minutes after the mucus has been collected. One of the fertility team will examine the mucus under the microscope and will give you the results straight away.

If the test is negative does this mean we won't be able to have children?

Certainly not. There can be various reasons why the PCT is negative. We may have to arrange the PCT on a different day of your cycle or examine your partner's sperm in more detail.

What if I have poor mucus or no mucus?

There can be a problem with mucus. In such cases we ask that the PCT is repeated on a different cycle day, or that you take some tablets in your next cycle to increase the quality of the mucus.

What are the tablets?

These are oestrogen tablets. Before you start to take them it is important that you inform the Doctor/Nurse if you or any immediate family has suffered from a deep vein thrombosis or pulmonary embolism (blood clot in the legs or lungs). You should start to take the tablets on the first day of your period and arrange an appointment for a PCT between days 10-16 of that cycle.

Are there any side effects?

The oestrogen tablets are very similar to taking the oral contraceptive pill. Therefore, you will not conceive whilst taking them. You may experience some nausea and breast tenderness. If you do feel sick whilst taking them you may find it easier to take them last thing at night.

Why do I take more tablets after the oestrogen tablets?

While you are taking the oestrogen tablets it is a "false cycle". You will need to take the second course of tablets (Provera) which will induce a period about three days after you have finished taking them. This will enable you to return to a natural cycle the following month.

Questions?

If you have any further questions regarding your post coital test please contact the clinic administrator (Sarah) on 0117 9146501, or Carrie Pretsell on 07973 681266 or Dr Akande on 07860752616.