

SWIMMIN' BOYS

A summer guide to sperm testing.

By Ben Fogelson



Pregnancy

If you've been trying to get pregnant with your partner for more than a year, and you haven't conceived, an obstetrician will tell you about the "group" you belong to — namely, that people in "your group" will, if they continue in their fervid monthly efforts to successfully author the spark of life, become pregnant at a rate of 4 percent per month. That sucks for those of us who really want a child, but — alas — them's the breaks. At least we have each other, and food on the table, and cable.

Meanwhile, one step to take if you want extra information regarding your potential chances, is checking to see how well "your boys swim."

That, my friend, is a sperm analysis. Some say "sperm test," but those are probably the same people who didn't just get led into a little white room by a giggling, hunchbacked, bug-eyed nurse.

That was me, not the nurse but the fellow being led, and this piece goes out to those of you who've ever wondered just what that scintillating experience is like.

First of all, you get the option to "collect" at home.

"You can come in and pick up a sterile container, or you can collect here," said the woman on the phone. "Collect," I wondered, then it dawned on me, like a big light bulb turning on and off, really fast, for about five minutes. I knew what she meant!

Home, baby, that's where I'm collectin', not in some little white room staffed by women just barely holding back enormous

laughs, oh no. But my wife's father was coming over early to help work on our house, and I had to get to work myself, and the window of opportunity the lab gives you per day to bring home a vial is only a few hours wide, so I found myself headed to the clinic last Thursday morning with semi-disturbing plans of semi-public "collection."

"Make sure you don't ejaculate for two days prior to collection," said the perky woman on the phone, and so I waited four. Wanted good results, you know, and so driving over, even the tops of the streetlamps were looking kind of sexy and good.

Entering the medical office, the first thing I noticed, besides the fact that women were sitting everywhere pretending not to look at me, was that on a table beside the receptionist's counter was a thick magazine turned over, showing a shiny, full-page, full-color spread of the most sexual and blatant ad for woman's brassieres I've ever seen. What was it doing there? Why that particular picture? Why was it tilted so that I had a perfect, upright view of it from the counter? It had to be intentional, I thought, it just had to be. These are nuclear-fast considerations I had all in the blink of an eye, when a woman turned from behind the counter and asked if she could "help me."

Is this where it begins? I think. What'd she mean by that?

"Yeah, I'm here to do a sperm analysis," I say in a half-whisper, affecting as tired and as bored a manner as possible.

"Are you taking a container or are you collecting here?"

"Here," I say, exhaling a deep breath.

"Well, let me collect your hundred dollars," she said, her hand brushing mine uncomfortably when she took the check, "and then a nurse will be out to help you," she says.

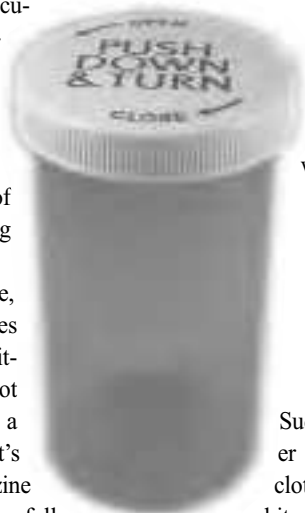
Holy shit! "Collect" my hundred dollars? A nurse to help me? I was about to panic. Unable to resist another glance at the bra advertisement on my way over to a bulletin board, I turned my back on the whole scene lest I freak out for real, grabbed some brochure and pretended to read it.

Then I heard a door creak slowly open behind me. I spun in slow-motion, a paper-thin look of curiosity on my face, as if I didn't know for whom the portal opened.

There she was, a medieval hunchback in white, smiling an all-too knowing smile.

"Hi Benjamin, come this way."

That's one too many fuckin' innuendoes for my comfort, I think, following the woman. She holds the door open for me and we step into a darkened corridor.



'Make sure you don't ejaculate for two days prior to collection,' said the perky woman on the phone, and so I waited four.

Suddenly she stiffens. There's another woman standing there in civilian clothes, right outside the nondescript white door from my imagination, and the woman's just ... standing there, as if waiting for something to happen, or for someone to step out from within the door.

"Oh," squeaks the nurse, nervously, in a low voice, "There are ... people ... right in the room where I was going to put you." Then she kind of just turns her head to the side and becomes a waiting statue, frozen in the dimly lit corridor.

No way, I think. "Just give me a holler when you're ready," I say, flustered, jumping back into the waiting room to the woman's

"alright" trailing behind me. Last thing I was going to do was sit there and wait for someone to finish up and then squeak in behind him before the doorknob cooled.

In about a minute, however, she pokes her head out again and returns me to the corridor and apologizes to my "no worries." Then she knocks on the white door; there's no one there. She opens it and to my surprise steps into the empty little room ahead of me, and suddenly we're crowded in there, just me, the hunchback and enough porno to exhaust Ron Jeremy. It's true: *Penthouse*, *Hustler*, *High Society*, you name it.

There's a sink, a toilet, and a brown plastic vial sitting on a counter by all the porno mags. That's a damn big vial, I think, wondering if four days of waiting could have been enough.

I don't know how it happens, but somehow I get past the hunchback, and I'm standing in the corner of the room by the toilet. She's looking at me the whole time from under a brown bowl-cut, and her hands are shaking. I notice her teeth could use some work.

"Do you need anything else?" She asks, and I jump backwards onto the toilet seat.

Not really, but "no," I say, and she backs

up and out of the room. The door swings shut and I leap at the lock.

Click.

And that's that. When I opened the door again, the halls were empty. I finally left the building, and now I expect a phone call, telling me either my boys can swim, or they can't.

And that's all you get, except for this last note: When I arrived at work and told a few people about my crazy experience, one of my co-workers asked, "Did they offer that anal stimulation thingie that makes you ejaculate automatically?"

"No," I said. "No, they didn't offer that. Thanks." **EW**



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