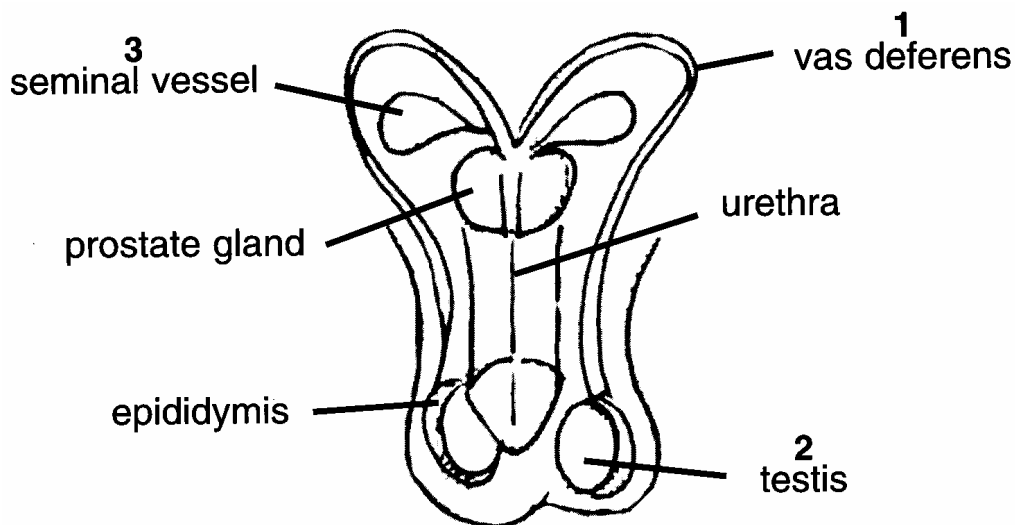


Information on sexual matters for men with cystic fibrosis

Fertility

Most men with Cystic Fibrosis (CF) have a blockage of a tube called the vas deferens (1), which carries sperm from the testes (2) where they are made, to the seminal vesicles (3) where they are stored until release.



Some men with CF are unable to father children naturally because fluid released at ejaculation does not contain sperm. Although present in the testes, sperm cannot pass through the blockage. Some CF men may be unaffected. If you want to check your fertility you should ask your doctor in the CF clinic for a sperm count.

Fertility Tests

Many men with CF are unsure whether they are fertile and would like to know for certain. We can easily test for fertility by performing a sperm count. This involves providing a sample of semen, which is sent to the pathology laboratory, where the sperm are counted using a microscope.

Sexual function

Sexual function is unaffected by CF.

Contraception

If following a sperm count you are fertile, you and your partner may need to consider using contraception. You may wish to discuss family planning with your GP or CF doctor. If you are not fertile but in a stable relationship you may feel as a couple you do not need to use contraceptive precautions.

If you are not in a stable relationship or if you think there is a risk of getting a sexually transmitted disease you would be wise to consider the use of barrier methods with either a condom or femidom at the time of intercourse.

Having children

Men with CF may wish to consider having children in the future. If you are considering this you are advised to discuss this with your doctor. If you are not fertile you may wish to consider artificial insemination by donor with your partner (checking of the donor for CF carries status is carried out).

Alternatively, conception by infertile CF men is possible using sperm extracted from their own testes and stored for later use in an in-vitro fertilisation technique with your partner. This is carried out at a fertility clinic and can be arranged through the Heartlands CF clinic.

We would be happy to discuss this with you and would be encouraging you if you feel it is right for you and your partner.

Adoption if either partner has CF is often a difficult option, but may be successfully achieved.

Thrush

Sometimes men with CF may develop an itchy rash on the penis. When this occurs during or after a course of antibiotics, it can be due to a fungal infection called thrush. This is easily treated with cream, which your doctor can prescribe. Sometimes a similar rash can occur after unprotected sex. This can also be due to thrush or it may be due to a sexually transmitted disease. If you are in any doubt or have any other symptoms such as discharge from your penis you should seek advice from an STD clinic or see your doctor without delay.

Discussing sex

We know that discussing sexual matters with anyone is often difficult. Therefore we will ask you about it from time to time. If we do not please talk to the person in the clinic you feel most comfortable with. We will not be embarrassed with anything you may need to tell us about.

We realise this is a very important part of your life and want to reassure you that anything you say will be treated in confidence. If you wish we will not record any details in your medical records. We recognise that you will want to talk in private about these matters and would wish to come into the consulting room alone.

Information for Patients

Contact Us:

If you are concerned about any of these points raised in this leaflet or have any further queries please speak to your consultant or the CF team.

Additional Information Sources:

For more information on all aspects of living with Cystic Fibrosis you can visit the Cystic Fibrosis Trust web site at: www.cftrust.org.uk.

For local news and events the West Midlands Regional Cystic Fibrosis Unit based at Heartland Hospital has its own website at: www.heartlandscf.org.uk.

Further Sources of Information

NHS Direct

Telephone 0845 4647 or visit them on the Internet at <http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk>

Heartlands Hospital - Health Information Centre

You may wish to visit the Health Information Centre located at the Main Entrance at Birmingham Heartlands Hospital, Tel: 0121 424 2280, Email: healthinfo.centre@heartofengland.nhs.uk

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Our commitment to confidentiality

We keep personal and clinical information about you to ensure you receive appropriate care and treatment. Everyone working in the NHS has a legal duty to keep information about you confidential.

We will always ask you for your consent if we need to use information that identifies you. We will share information with other parts of the NHS to support your healthcare needs, and we will inform your GP of your progress unless you ask us not to. You can help us by pointing out any information in your records which is wrong or needs updating.

Please use the space below to write down any questions you may want to ask: