DR. CHIRAG GUPTA | UROLOGY & ANDROLOGY

Testicular Sperm Extraction (TESE)

Patient guide | Sperm retrieval procedures

Use this guide to prepare questions for your urologist. Your individual plan may differ.

What it is

TESE is a surgical method for collecting a small sample of tissue from the testicle and checking it in the laboratory for sperm.

When it may be considered

TESE may be considered when sperm are absent from the ejaculate and retrieval is part of a fertility plan. The cause of azoospermia, examination, laboratory results and the plan for assisted reproduction help determine whether testicular or epididymal retrieval is appropriate. In non-obstructive azoospermia, AUA/ASRM guidance recommends discussing microdissection TESE.

What happens

The surgeon takes one or more small tissue samples through a small opening in the testicle. The sample is examined by an embryology or andrology laboratory. The procedure may be performed with a local anaesthetic nerve block or with other anaesthesia, depending on the setting and clinical plan. If sperm are found, the team discusses whether to use them fresh for ICSI or freeze them for future use.

Preparing for the procedure

Tell the care team about medicines, allergies, bleeding problems, previous operations and fertility treatment. Ask whether fasting or medicine changes are needed, whether a support person should take you home, and whether the retrieval will be coordinated with the IVF laboratory. Follow the specific instructions from your team.

Recovery and possible risks

Temporary soreness, bruising or swelling can occur. Follow your clinician’s wound-care, activity and pain-relief instructions. Potential risks include bleeding, infection, pain, no sperm being found, a further procedure being needed and, rarely, testicular injury. Retrieval is not guaranteed.

Questions to discuss

Why do you recommend TESE rather than PESA, TESA or microTESE? Will sperm be used fresh or frozen? What is the plan if sperm are not found? What symptoms should prompt a call?

Sources for further reading

• Urology Care Foundation - Sperm Retrieval
• AUA/ASRM Guideline - Male Infertility, Part II

General educational information only; it is not a diagnosis or a substitute for advice from your treating clinician. Follow instructions specific to you.