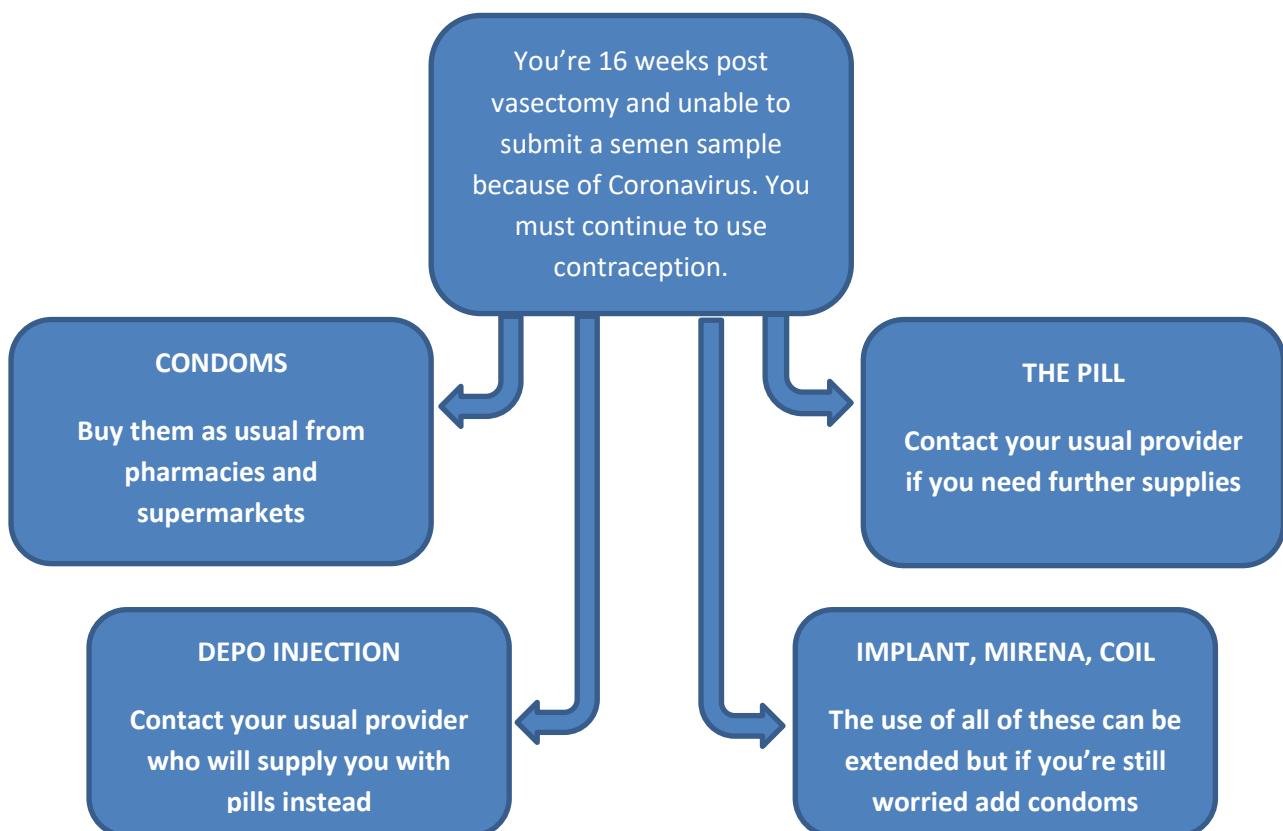


# **Guidance for Men who are unable to submit semen samples post-vasectomy due to Coronavirus**

When you had your vasectomy procedure you were advised that it would be necessary for submit a semen sample to the laboratory after approximately 16 weeks and 30 ejaculations to confirm that the operation was successful. This is because vasectomy carries a 1 in 200 risk of failing, meaning your semen would still contain live sperm capable of fertilising an egg to create a pregnancy. However as you are aware all non-emergency work within the NHS has stopped due to the Coronavirus pandemic. This includes the laboratories which would check your semen sample for sperm. This guidance will advise you what to do in these current circumstances.

**Most importantly DO NOT STOP using contraception** – you do not know if you will be that 1 man out of 200 whose operation has failed. Once the pandemic is over we shall be in touch with you so that you can make the necessary arrangements to present a sample at the lab. At that time if no sperm are seen in your sample you will receive a letter giving you clearance, you could stop using additional contraception, and the likelihood of your partner becoming pregnant would be 1 in 2000.

The guidance below will help you to decide what action, if any, you need to take now. Please note that a small number of couples will require a change of contraceptive method in order to stay safe and well. You can access more information on vasectomy at <https://www.fsrh.org/standards-and-guidance/documents/cec-ceu-guidance-sterilisation-cpd-sep-2014/> or more general information at <https://www.fsrh.org/about-us/information-for-the-public/>.



### **CONDOMS**

If you are using **condoms** please CARRY ON USING THEM. They will be available as usual from supermarkets and pharmacies.

### **THE PILL**

If your partner is using a **pill** and is going to run out in the next three months please ask her to contact her usual provider. Generally it will be possible for her to continue on that pill but it may need to be changed to a different one.

### **DEPO INJECTION**

If your partner is having the **Depo injection** she should contact her usual provider just before the next injection is due so that future arrangements can be made. The Depo injection will not be available as face to face consultations are currently for emergencies only. Generally she will be offered a supply of progesterone-only-pills to tide her over until either Depo injections again become available or you get clearance on your post-vasectomy semen sample.

### **IMPLANT**

If your partner has an **implant** in her arm it will be licensed for 3 years of use. If it is due to run out before you are able to get clearance on your vasectomy you can rest assured that it does not suddenly switch off at 3 years. She will be safe to leave the implant in place as it will certainly provide good contraception for 4 years but if she is worried she should contact her usual provider who could give her a pill to take on top or you could use condoms. She can make arrangements for removal once the crisis is over and you have got clearance on your post-vasectomy semen sample.

### **MIRENA IUS**

If your partner has the **Mirena IUS** fitted it will be licensed for use for 5 years. However if it is due for removal before you are able to get a letter of clearance following your vasectomy please read on. The latest guidance is that this can be safely used for 6 years with very little reduction in contraceptive effect but if you are worried then use condoms as well. Your partner can then make arrangements for removal once the crisis is over and you have got clearance on your post-vasectomy semen sample.

### **COPPER COIL (IUD)**

If your partner has a **copper IUD** fitted the latest guidance is that a 5 year coil can be used 6 years with very little reduction in contraceptive effect in that 6th year of use. A 10 year coil can be extended to 12 years with very little effect on contraceptive effect but in both of these instances if you are still worried use condoms too. Your partner may need to contact her contraception provider to check which coil she has in place. She can make arrangements for removal once the crisis is over and you have got clearance on your post-vasectomy semen sample.

**THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER IS THAT YOU CANNOT RELY UPON YOUR VASECTOMY FOR CONTRACEPTION UNTIL YOU HAVE SUBMITTED A SEMEN SAMPLE AND HAD A LETTER OF CLEARANCE.**