

The James Cook University Hospital
Department of Reproductive Medicine

CRYOPRESERVATION OF SPERM

The treatment required for your current illness may unfortunately affect the quality of your sperm, making it difficult for you to father children in the future. However, before you start your treatment it may be possible to cryopreserve (freeze) and store some of your sperm for your future use. Do not worry if you think it may be difficult to produce a sperm sample at present – there are medications that we can give you to help.

You should be aware that because of your illness the sperm samples that you produce at present may not be of good quality. You need to know also that the freezing and thawing process may damage the sperm and that not all sperm samples stored will survive. We, therefore, cannot guarantee the quality of any samples that we store for your future use.

It is also important to remember that the use of your stored sperm in the future will require your partner to undergo some form of assisted conception treatment within a licensed fertility clinic.

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) is the government body established in 1991 to regulate fertility clinics in the UK. A copy of the Patients' Guide to Licensed Fertility Clinics may be obtained, free of charge, by telephoning 020 7377 5077, or by contacting their website at <http://www.hfea.gov.uk>.

For patients freezing their sperm on a self-funding basis, the current charge can be found on our "Fees for Private Treatment" leaflet. However, patients undergoing treatment on an NHS basis should be aware that the provision of funding for reproductive medicine procedures on the NHS is limited, and varies between different clinical commissioning groups (CCGs). We cannot guarantee that the NHS will fund any reproductive medicine procedures for you in the future and you may have to pay for any future treatment yourself. Information about reproductive medicine treatments and their costs at The James Cook University Hospital is available upon request. **Freezing and storage of sperm does not, however, commit you to any future treatment or expense.**

If you do produce a sample that can be frozen, it is essential that we have accurate and appropriate consent from you regarding the storage and use of your sperm. You will be given the opportunity to discuss fully the implications of this consent with a member the Department of Reproductive Medicine. You need to consider the future use of any samples stored very carefully.

Further detailed information is given overleaf.

Additional Information

- To be eligible for this service you should be over the age of 16.
- Your sperm samples can be stored, with your consent, for any length of time up to 55 years. After this time we are obliged by law to destroy them.
- You will be required to produce a sperm sample by masturbation. There is a dedicated room available for this purpose. However, you may be allowed to produce your sample at home if appropriate.
- You may be asked to provide more than one sample. As we can only freeze and store live sperm, if no live sperm are found in your sample, we will be unable to help you any further at this stage.
- Live sperm samples will be frozen and stored in liquid nitrogen tanks in our laboratory. All sperm samples are individually labelled and coded with your identifying information, and the details checked for accuracy.
- It is not possible to predict with certainty what the effect very long term storage may have on the sperm. However, in general it is thought that there is unlikely to be any adverse effect other than increased risk of loss of the sperm due to a small risk of equipment failure.
- Advances in assisted conception treatments make it possible to fertilise eggs, even when very few sperm are present in the semen.
- Frozen sperm used in assisted conception treatments such as in vitro fertilisation (IVF), or intra-cytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI), can produce pregnancy rates similar to those produced from fresh sperm. However, it is quite likely that in order to achieve this the sperm will need to be injected directly into the eggs by intra-cytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI).
- Unfortunately, the fact that the quality of a frozen sperm sample is good does not guarantee that a pregnancy will follow assisted conception treatment. The chance of a pregnancy will depend very much upon the fertility of the woman being treated with the sperm. For women under the age of 35, approximately one in three couples will achieve a live birth from any one cycle of IVF or ICSI using either fresh or frozen sperm.
- Sometimes sperm production can start again following treatment with chemotherapy. You may wish to have a further sperm test to confirm this - we recommend that you wait at least one year following treatment before this test is undertaken.
- It is important to keep us informed at all times of a reliable address through which you can be contacted.
- If you would like to take advantage of this service, or would like any further information, please telephone our nursing team on 01642 854836.