

Centre for Reproductive Medicine

Sperm Freezing Before Oncology or Haematology Treatment

Why should I store sperm?

Chemotherapy and radiotherapy treatment may lead to infertility as a side-effect, by affecting the numbers of sperm that you produce. The infertility may be temporary, but sometimes it can be permanent. We cannot predict the effects of the treatment on your fertility, which is why we offer this opportunity to all patients receiving treatment.

If you wish to start a family, or expand your family in the future, it is important that you store some of your sperm prior to starting treatment.

Modern methods of infertility treatment mean that it is worth storing a sample even if it is very poor.

However, you should also be aware that sometimes there are no sperm present in the sample at all. Unfortunately, if no sperm are present, then we will not be able to store your sample.

How long can my sperm be stored for?

Sperm storage is carried out at the Centre for Reproductive Medicine (CRM), University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire, under licence from the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA). The law allows your sperm to be stored for up to 55 years, initially you can consent to 10 years. After 10 years you are able to extend for a maximum of 10 years (up to 55 years).

We recommend you have a semen analysis 12 months after your treatment has finished, this will enable you to make an informed decision in regard to your stored sample.

Consent forms and ID

Consent forms will be explained and completed during your first visit to the Centre for Reproductive Medicine.

Please be assured that your stored sperm would never be used for any purpose other than that indicated by you on the consent form. You have the right to change any details on the consent form at any time, which we will ask for in writing.

In addition to completing consent forms, we also require some form of photographic identification such as a driving license or passport, to confirm your identity prior to storing samples.

How much does it cost?

The NHS currently covers the cost for the initial treatment and storage for a minimum of five years.

The annual storage fee, post five-year storage, is currently **£200**

How will the samples be obtained and stored?

Semen samples for freezing are produced by masturbation into a sterile container in a private room at the CRM. Appointments will be arranged with you to attend the CRM; these can be arranged at short notice.

How could the frozen sperm be used in the future?

Your frozen sperm may be used in several assisted conception techniques in the future, your consultant would be able to discuss these with you. At your storage consultation you can discuss treatment options you develop a better understanding.

We will also discuss how you would like your samples to be used in the event of your death or mental incapacity, it may be possible to leave your samples to your partner for them to use. Please note, you will have a maximum of 10 years after the date of death or mental incapacity confirmation to use all the sperm samples and embryos created.

We cannot guarantee that a pregnancy will occur after any form of assisted conception treatment. The quality of stored sperm should not significantly decline with time, and there is no evidence to suggest that the use of frozen sperm has a harmful effect on any resulting child. However, we cannot make any guarantees in this regard.

Storage of sperm does not automatically entitle you to be accepted for assisted conception treatment later. All patients at the CRM are assessed by a consultant prior to acceptance for treatment. If you wish, you may request that your stored sperm be moved for treatment at another centre. A charge is payable for this service.

Finding out more information

Should you feel you would like to discuss your fertility options with an independent counsellor then we can arrange a confidential meeting.

Once you have sperm stored you may contact the Centre for Reproductive Medicine at any time in the future to discuss any issues or queries you may have relating to sperm storage, your fertility or assisted conception treatment.

What happens once my samples are in storage?

It is vital, once you have sperm in storage, that you inform the CRM of any changes in your circumstances, for example, if you change address. It is also important that you inform us if there is a change regarding your partner as your consent forms will need to be updated. This will ensure that we will always be able to determine your wishes about your stored sperm. Staff at the Centre for Reproductive Medicine may contact you periodically to check that your records remain accurate.

Please note, the Centre for Reproductive Medicine is obliged by law to dispose of your sperm once it has reached its maximum storage date.

If at any time we are unable to contact you at your given address we will use reasonable means to trace you, whilst maintaining confidentiality.

Please note that whilst we take all reasonable precautions, the Centre for Reproductive Medicine cannot be held responsible for any accidental damage or loss of sperm samples whilst in storage.

Further information regarding sperm storage or assisted conception treatments can be obtained from the Andrology service on: 02476 96 88 73.

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