

Information for Patients

Long Term Sperm Storage

Introduction

Sperm storage is provided as a free service to NHS patients where fertility might be impaired by a medical condition, or as a side effect of treatment. A charge is made to fee paying patients. Appointments are usually made quickly (often the next working day). This gives you the best chance to store as much of your sperm as possible, before your treatment starts.

How are samples produced and stored?

Samples are produced here in Andrology, in a private room, by masturbation. If you are unable to produce your sample in Andrology, arrangements can be made for you to bring a sample from home. Samples are stored in small, sealed bottles in liquid nitrogen vapour. These bottles are carefully labelled with your name, date of birth and reference number, and are witnessed by a second member of staff, who also verifies the details. Freezing takes place as soon as possible after the sample is passed, so it is better if the sample is produced on the premises.

Can my partner accompany me?

Yes. You may be accompanied by anyone you choose. This can be your partner, parents, a member of your family or a friend, however, it is not essential and you will be seen alone if you prefer.

Will my sample be suitable for freezing?

After you have passed your first sample, you will be asked to wait while the sample is assessed for quality. You will be told about the results of the assessment and, provided there are sperm which are alive in the sample, it will be frozen for you. In general, sperm quality varies and some samples freeze better than others. For this reason, we cannot guarantee that freezing will be successful. If you wish, we can offer you further appointments at this time.

How long can sperm be stored?

By law, sperm can be stored up to 55 years. After 10 years you will be sent a clinic appointment to assess if continued sperm storage is required. A doctor can authorise extension of sperm storage for a further 10 years up to the maximum limit of 55 years. So it is

important that you keep us updated with any changes in your details so that we can contact you every 10 years.

What happens to my stored sperm if I die?

At the time of sperm storage, you need to decide what should happen to your stored sperm if you died. You can give consent for your sperm to be used posthumously for assisted reproduction treatment by a named partner. If you do not give consent for your sperm to be used posthumously, it will be allowed to perish when you die.

What if something goes wrong with storage?

Whilst we do everything possible to ensure the safety of your samples, we cannot guarantee against all eventualities. For example, in the event of a strike or civil disturbance interrupting the supply of liquid nitrogen, or in the event of an equipment failure.

When can we use the sperm?

You can use the sperm at any time. Patients often like to wait until they have recovered from their medical or surgical treatment. When you wish to consider a pregnancy, you and your partner should go to see your General Practitioner (GP), who would then refer you to the Assisted Reproductive Unit. You can be seen here at Saint Mary's or in a hospital/unit closer to your home. However, we are only allowed to transfer samples to hospitals/units which hold licences issued by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA). Your GP will be able to find out which units hold an HFEA licence for you.

Using my stored sperm samples with a surrogate

If you think you may need to use your samples with someone other than your sexual partner there maybe additional tests required in accordance with HFEA guidance. These would be similar screening tests that we use for donors.

How are the samples used?

There are a number of options which may be open to you. The main ones are:

- IUI Intra-uterine Insemination
- IVF In Vitro Fertilisation
- ICSI Intra Cytoplasmic Sperm Injection

All these will be explained to you by the doctor when you are ready to start a family.

How successful are these treatments?

Each method has a different success rate, and a lot will depend on the potential fertility of the person undergoing the assisted reproductive treatment. Standard gynaecological tests on this person would normally be recommended before using your stored semen, and these can be arranged by the doctor. Frozen sperm, however, is not as fertile as fresh sperm and we are unable to guarantee that a pregnancy will result from its use. All this will be explained to you when you and your partner are seen by the doctor.

Counselling

Infertility counselling is available at Saint Mary's Hospital and appointments to see the counsellor can be arranged for you. The time of sperm banking may be stressful for you and your future fertility may be the last thing on your mind. Later on, you may well want to consider your options, and take time to go through them. Even if you are not ready to start a family, you can, if you wish, be given an appointment to discuss the situation.

Family planning during treatment

There is no definite proof that your chemotherapy/radiotherapy will cause changes to your sperm, which could affect any children conceived during this treatment. However, it is advisable for you to use some form of contraception during the chemotherapy/radiotherapy treatment and for twelve months after it finishes, as a precaution.

Repeat tests

You may wish to check whether your treatment has affected your fertility. Some patients recover their fertility after treatment, and if you want a sperm test at any time after banking, please telephone (0161) 276 6473 for an appointment. Please tell us that you have sperm banked with us when you telephone to request a sperm test. Please allow six months to elapse from completion of your chemotherapy/ radiotherapy treatment before contacting us.

Other options

If your sperm is unsuitable for freeze preservation, you may wish, in the long term, to discuss the options of donor insemination or adoption. If you have any questions or worries about sperm preservation, or any of the subjects covered in this leaflet, please do not hesitate to contact the Andrology Department on (0161) 276 6473.

How to find us

Please follow the directions on the maps given below. The Andrology Laboratories are based in the Department of Reproductive Medicine in the Old Saint Mary's Hospital (Oxford Road) on the first floor. Turn right at the top of the stairs and then right again.

Please come into the reception and ring the bell for attention.

If you are a wheelchair user please telephone the department in advance (0161 276 6473). We have a separate entrance just off Oxford Road (Entrance 2 on map overleaf). Please press the intercom on arrival.

Department of Reproductive Medicine
Andrology Laboratories
Old Saint Mary's Hospital
Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9WL

Phone: 0161 276 6473

Fax: 0161 276 6609

<https://mft.nhs.uk/saint-marys/services/gynaecology/reproductive-medicine/andrology/>

Car parking

The best parking for patients visiting Saint Mary's is the multi-storey car park on the junction of Upper Brook Street and Hathersage Road. The entrance to the car park is on Hathersage Road.

For car parking tariffs see <https://mft.nhs.uk/saint-marys/patients-visitors/visitors/car-parking/>

Parking is provided free on the ground floor for patients with mobility problems who are displaying the appropriate badge. Vehicles will be clamped if they are parked inappropriately.



