

Information for Patients

Infertility Sperm Storage

Sperm storage is provided as back up for your infertility treatment at Saint Mary's Hospital.

Wherever possible, a fresh semen sample would be used on the day of your infertility treatment.

How are the samples produced and stored?

Semen samples are produced here in Andrology, in a private room, by masturbation. 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 given, so it is better if the sample is produced on the premises.

Can my wife/partner accompany me?

Yes. However, it is not essential and you will be seen alone if you prefer.

How do I get the results?

You can telephone Andrology the next working day, before 3.00 pm, on (0161) 276 6473, to confirm if your sample was frozen and has been assessed for suitability as back up for infertility treatment.

How long can sperm be stored?

By law, sperm can be stored up to 10 years or until your infertility treatment at Saint Mary's is completed, whichever is soonest. The sample(s) will then be destroyed unless you make alternative arrangements. So it is important that you keep us updated with any changes in your details so that we can contact you.

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 equipment failure, the effect on your samples could be detrimental.

What happens if I don't have any sperm stored?

If you are unsuccessful in storing any sperm or if the sperm sample fails the freezing and defrosting process then you will be referred back to your doctor. You will be seen in the clinic where your doctor will discuss alternative options.

When can we use the sperm?

Once the sperm freezing procedure is complete, your doctor at Saint Mary's Hospital is notified. Within a few weeks you and your partner will be seen in the clinic in order to complete the relevant documentation/consent forms and to discuss the IVF treatment process before starting the treatment.

How are these samples used?

These samples are stored only as a back-up for infertility treatment. A fresh semen sample is preferable for infertility treatment and you will be expected to produce a fresh semen sample on the day of infertility treatment.

How successful are these treatments?

Each treatment method has a different success rate, and a lot will depend on the potential fertility of your wife/partner.

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 of this will be explained to you when you and your wife/partner are seen by the doctor.

What are the prospects of using frozen sperm?

The success of using samples depends on the quality and quantity of the sperm which was stored. Men who have been very ill systemically, for example, with persistent fever, weight loss, loss of appetite etc, generally have very poor sperm samples and sometimes may have even 'switched off' their sperm production completely. Therefore the quality of sperm samples obtained is variable between patients and depends on individual circumstances. Cancers that affect the whole body, such as leukaemia, may have a more

profound effect when compared to localised tumours with a malignant potential. We will always offer you the chance rather than make judgements ourselves.

The samples are diluted with a preservative when they are frozen to protect the sperm against damage during the freezing process. However this does not guarantee the sample will survive the freeze-thaw process, and even if it does, there is usually a reduction in the motility (movement) of the sperm.

As previously stated the chances of success in achieving a pregnancy depend on many factors including the method chosen for their use. If sufficient numbers of sperm of adequate quality have been frozen then we would expect you to have a reasonable chance of achieving a pregnancy, but this cannot be guaranteed.

Counselling

Infertility counselling is available at Saint Mary's Hospital and appointments to see the counsellor can be arranged for you.

How to find us

Please refer to the map overleaf.

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 reception and ring the bell for attention.

If you are a wheelchair user please telephone the department in advance on (0161) 276 6473 so we can arrange to meet you at the disabled access to the left of the building.

Car Parking

A multi-storey car park is located next to Saint Mary's Hospital at the junction of Upper Brook Street and Hathersage Road.

The entrance to the car park is on Hathersage Road. For car parking tariffs see <http://www.cmft.nhs.uk>, go to 'Show Information for Patients, Visitors and Carers Links' and click 'Getting to Hospital'. Parking is provided free on the ground floor for patients with mobility problems who are displaying the appropriate badge. Please note that vehicles will be clamped if they are parked inappropriately.

