



**Saint Mary's Managed Clinical Service  
Division of Gynaecology**

**PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET**

# LONG TERM SPERM STORAGE

Semen can be stored to preserve sperm for use at a future date and this can be undertaken to preserve the fertility of patients where treatment might impair future fertility. This may be in cases of oncology patients, patients undergoing gender transition or patients who are due to start gonadotoxic medication or treatment for other reasons. The Andrology department specialises in medicine relating to men's health, appointments are usually made quickly (often the next working day) to support decisions regarding the number of samples stored.

Where possible, you should be referred to Andrology for sperm banking before receiving any treatment that may affect your fertility. You may also be referred to Andrology for 'back up' freezing in case of being absent or inability to produce on the day of treatment.

Sperm storage is usually provided as a free service to NHS patients, please note it is chargeable to fee paying patients.

**Please read all the leaflet before your appointment as it contains important information.**

## PREPARING FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT

### HOW DO I PREPARE FOR MY APPOINTMENT?

We advise patients to try and stop sexual activity for at least 48 hours but no longer than 7 days prior to your appointment. This is only advice, and we would recommend that you attend even if you have not followed this.

Read through this leaflet so you understand the entire process.

Contact us if you have any questions.

### WHAT HAPPENS DURING MY APPOINTMENT?

A member of the Andrology team will take you to a private consultation room and will talk to you about the process and support you so that you can make the right decisions for you. We are there to ensure you have all the necessary information and answer any questions that you may have.

The consent forms that are completed can be challenging, but we will help you during the consultation process.

Once you have completed the consent forms, and if you are happy to proceed, we will show you into a private room where you will produce a semen sample by masturbation.

If you need to change your appointment, please contact the team as soon as possible as this will depend on your treatment date and when the bloods have been taken for your appointment.

## WHAT WILL I HAVE BEEN SENT ELECTRONICALLY?

You will have been sent a link via text message to Fertility Consent (this leaflet was attached to this system).

Fertility Consent is the platform where you will be completing your consent forms and discussing them during your appointment, and where you can access your completed consent forms.

Prior to your appointment, please complete registration, upload your photographic identification (see the next section) and any forms attached to the account. We usually send you a form for consent to disclosing identifying information (HFEA CD) but others may be added.

You may also be sent a link to MyMFT (the Manchester University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust platform). For your long-term storage appointment, you are not required to create a MyMFT account, although it may help with appointment reminders should you have any in the future with us.

We may agree in advance of your appointment to complete other forms attached to your account. These will be added if appropriate to you.

## WHAT DO I NEED TO BRING WITH ME?

You will need to bring:

- **Photographic identification** – this can include a passport, driving licence, citizen card or secure digital ID (official government approved).

If you do not have any of these, please contact the laboratory so we can provide you with advice.

## WHO CAN ACCOMPANY ME?

You may be accompanied by anyone you choose. This can be your partner, parents, a member of your family or a friend.

It is not essential to be accompanied, and you can be seen alone if you prefer. **We will ask some sensitive and personal questions during the consultation**, so keep this in mind.

## WHAT QUESTIONS WILL BE ASKED AND WHAT DECISIONS WILL I NEED TO MAKE?

We will go through your referral to make sure we have enough details and discuss your blood results. Sometimes we may need a little more information about your history and current treatment/medications as this can support interpretation of your semen analysis results.

We will also ask about the following:

- Previous pregnancies or children – this is to establish whether there is a history of fertility.
- Whether you have travelled abroad in the last 3 months – as certain regions of the world carry an increased risk of viral infections which may prevent storage in our unit.

You will also need to make some decisions when you are with us for the consent forms to be completed. Some key decisions include:

- Timeframe for storage – we will ask how long you will like us to store your samples for. There is a separate section in this leaflet about this.
- Whether or not you would like to legally name a partner so that they can use your sample in the unfortunate event that you were to die or become mentally incapacitated and do not have the ability to make certain decisions about your life. A healthcare professional will therefore certify your inability to make these decisions. The Mental Capacity Act underpins key principles in this area.
- The type of fertility treatment your samples may be used in – this is only relevant if you name a partner.
- What time you would like to be contacted to discuss the outcome of your appointment.

Your consent can be withdrawn or varied at any time, such as naming a partner, removing a named partner, decisions about the use of your sample by your stated partner after your death (posthumous) consent etc.

**If you change your mind about any decisions you have made during your appointment, we can arrange for new consent forms to be completed. Please contact the Andrology laboratory to discuss this.**

### **IF I WANT TO NAME SOMEONE TO BE ABLE TO USE MY GAMETES, WHAT INFORMATION WILL I NEED?**

If you name a person to be able to use your gametes (sperm) in the event of your death or if you become mentally incapacitated, we will need the following information about them:

- Full name
- Date of birth
- NHS number or alternative identification number

The person you are naming does not need to be with you when you attend, but we will need the above details to complete the appropriate consent forms.

If you are not sure, we can add a named person in the future if you wish.

### **HOW ARE SAMPLES PRODUCED?**

Most patients will produce their semen samples by masturbation in a private room in the Andrology department.

If you are unable to produce your sample in Andrology, arrangements can be made for you to bring a sample from home. We will need to give you some instructions for this to prevent the sample degrading, including timeframes for getting the sample to the department.

Freezing takes place as soon as possible after the sample is passed, to minimise potential negative influences from the ejaculate, so it is better if the sample is produced in the Andrology department.

# SPERM FREEZING AND STORAGE

## WILL MY SAMPLE BE SUITABLE FOR FREEZING?

After you have produced your first sample, you will be able to leave, and a trained healthcare professional will assess your sample for sperm 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.

Frozen samples are stored in small, sealed bottles (ampoules) in liquid nitrogen vapour at approximately -196 degrees Celsius. You may hear or see this process referred to as Cryopreservation. 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 checks the details.

In general, sperm quality varies, and some samples will be suitable for freezing and some will not. Additionally, individual samples may 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 I STORE MY SAMPLES FOR?

By law, sperm can be stored up to **55 years** although you cannot consent for the full timeframe at any one consent period. The maximum period of storage you can consent to is **10 years** although you can consent to less time if you wish.

We will contact you approximately 12 months prior to the end of your consent period and ask you what you would like to happen to your stored samples. You may want to consent to further storage time, or you may decide to withdraw consent and allow your samples to perish.

We cannot legally store your sperm if you do not consent, therefore it is vital you keep us updated with any changes to your contact details (address and telephone number).

**If we cannot gain consent from you, we are legally obliged to discard your samples.**

## 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 (after death) 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 we are informed of your death.

## WHAT HAPPENS 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.

## HOW WILL I RECEIVE MY RESULTS?

During your consultation, we will arrange a time that is best for us to call you with your results on the same day as your appointment. If we have not contacted you by 2pm, please call the Andrology laboratory to request your results.

If telephone calls are not possible, we can arrange an alternative to this.

If you have been referred from the Department of Reproductive Medicine for back-up storage, your clinician will be informed of the outcome.

## WHERE CAN I ACCESS MY SIGNED CONSENT FORMS AND HOW CAN I AMEND THEM?

All your consents are held on Fertility Consent (<https://mft-nhs.fertilityconsent.com/>). You can access them through that link online. If you have forgotten your password, there is an ability to reset this to regain access.

If you need to update your consents, all you need to do is contact us and tell us what you would like to change. One of the team will then review the information and inform you how to action this.

Sometimes, changes will mean consent forms need to be updated, or new ones added to your account so that changes are official and legal. If this is the case, we can send instructions or organise an appointment to support you.

## USE OF SPERM

### WHEN CAN I USE MY 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 an Assisted Reproductive Unit.

You can be seen here at Saint Mary's hospital or in a hospital/fertility unit closer to your home. However, we can only transfer samples to hospitals/fertility 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.

There will be a charge to transfer samples to other units. We can discuss this with you at the time this may be required.

### USING MY STORED SPERM WITH A SURROGATE

If you think you may need to use your samples with someone other than your sexual partner, there may be additional tests required in accordance with HFEA guidance. These would be similar screening tests that we use for donors. Treatment using a surrogate will be on a self-funded basis as this treatment is not funded on the NHS.

## BACK-UP PATIENTS ONLY

An analysis of your frozen sample may be requested by your clinician. If required one ampoule, will be thawed and will be assessed for the suitability of your sample for use in fertility treatment

Your clinician will be informed of the outcome.

## TREATMENT

### HOW ARE MY SAMPLES USED?

There are several options which may be open to you, depending on the quality of your frozen samples. The main ones are:

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

All these will be explained to you when you are ready to use your samples.

### HOW SUCCESSFUL ARE THESE TREATMENTS?

Each method has a different success rate, and this may depend on the potential fertility of the person undergoing the assisted reproductive treatment. Frozen sperm may have reduced quality compared to fresh sperm, and we are unable to guarantee that a pregnancy will result from its use.

Your partner / person undergoing assisted reproductive treatment may require undergoing testing prior to using your stored semen. This will be arranged and explained by the Assisted Reproductive Unit when you decide to have fertility treatment.

## 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. If you do not want to arrange this appointment at the time of banking, you can organise this later if you want to.

A leaflet will be provided to you when you attend for your appointment so that you can do this.

## 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.

Please contact the team responsible for your treatment to discuss this further if it has not been mentioned so you can follow their advice.

We do not know the impact of all treatments which may affect your fertility (not all treatments are classed as chemotherapy or radiotherapy) and suggest that you contact your doctor or referring clinician if you have any concerns or need further advice.

## FOLLOW UP TESTS

You may wish to check whether your treatment has affected your sperm quality. Some patients recover their sperm production after treatment, and if you want a diagnostic semen analysis after storage, please telephone or email us for an appointment (see contact details).

Allow at least 6 months after treatment before you have this test (this should be enough time to detect if your sperm production has been affected).

## OTHER OPTIONS

If your sperm is unsuitable for sperm freezing, you may wish, in the long term, to discuss the options. You may wish to have further investigations relating to your fertility, to do so, please contact your GP to be referred.

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 AND CAR PARKING

Please follow the directions on the maps given below. The Andrology Laboratories are based on the first floor of the Department of Reproductive Medicine in the **Old Saint Mary's Hospital**.

Old Saint Mary's Hospital is located on the corner of Oxford Road and Hathersage Road, opposite Whitworth Park.

Inside Old Saint Mary's Hospital, walk up the main staircase (under the stained-glass windows), turn right at the top of the stairs and then right again for the Andrology Department. Please come into the reception and ring the bell for attention.

If you have mobility issues, please telephone the department in advance (0161 276 6473). We have a separate entrance on Hathersage Road (Please see map below). Please press the intercom on arrival.



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

If you are using Google Maps, the Post Code M13 0JH will direct you to the entrance of the building.

The best parking for patients visiting Old 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/>



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

HFEA forms that could be used as part of the consent process:

- Your consent to disclosing identifying information (CD form)
- Your consent to the storage of your eggs or sperm (GS\_S form)



- **Your consent to your eggs, sperm and embryos being stored and used for training purposes in the event of mental incapacity (MIT Form)**
- **Your consent to the use of your sperm in artificial insemination (MGI Form)**
- **Your consent to your sperm and embryos created outside the body using your sperm being used in treatment (IVF and ICSI) or stored (MT Form)**

Clinic forms that could be used as part of the consent process:

- **Human Sperm/Semen cryopreservation & storage consent**
- **Sperm/semen test thaw consent**

## CONTACT DETAILS



(0161) 276 6473



[Andrology.Lab@mft.nhs.uk](mailto:Andrology.Lab@mft.nhs.uk)



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

Please note the working hours for the Andrology Laboratory are Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm.