



## **INFORMATION FOR PARENTS & ADOLESCENTS ABOUT SPERM FREEZING**

CAYA (Childhood,  
Adolescent and Young  
Adults) Patient Information



**Merrion Fertility Clinic**  
At the National Maternity Hospital

**Phone: +353 1 5567900**

60 Lower Mount Street,  
Dublin 2, Ireland



## Information about Sperm Freezing

There is a lot to think about when a young person is diagnosed with cancer. Your future fertility is probably not something you are thinking about right now, but it is important to know that some cancer treatments can cause infertility. It is also reassuring to know that freezing your sperm now, before treatment, gives you an opportunity to preserve your fertility for the future.

## What is Sperm Freezing?

Sperm freezing means that a sample of semen, which contains sperm, can be frozen and saved for many years in liquid nitrogen. At a later date, it can be thawed and used for fertility treatment. The freezing takes place at Merrion Fertility Clinic in Dublin.

## Why is it Important to know about Sperm Freezing?

Chemotherapy, radiotherapy or surgery can affect fertility, sometimes permanently, sometimes temporarily. This happens because of the effect of chemotherapy and radiotherapy on the germ cells in the testis which produce sperm. On completion of therapy the germ cells may recover, and your sperm count may return to normal. This can take up to five years. If it does not recover by then, it is unlikely that it will, and this is why it is so important to have previously frozen some of your sperm.

It is hard to be sure before treatment whether you will be affected, but approximately 1 in 3 males will have future problems.

## How and where do I do this?

The team looking after you at Children's Health Ireland (CHI) Crumlin (or your local hospital) will discuss sperm freezing with you and your parents. If you decide to go ahead, they will contact Merrion Fertility Clinic. You will need to have a blood test and sign some forms, including a consent form (the blood test is to ensure there is no risk of infections such as Hepatitis or HIV in any sperm samples that are frozen).

At a time that suits everyone involved, you will meet the fertility nurse from Merrion Fertility Clinic and confirm all your details. You will then be given a private, quiet room where you can provide a semen sample by masturbating. The fluid that is produced is called semen and it contains sperm. You will be given a container to collect the sample and when you are ready, you will call or text the fertility nurse and give her the sample. A phone will be provided by the nurse for this purpose.

The sample is usually collected in Merrion Fertility Clinic, but if for any reason it needs to be done in CHI Crumlin, the fertility nurse will meet you there.



## What happens after I produce my sample?

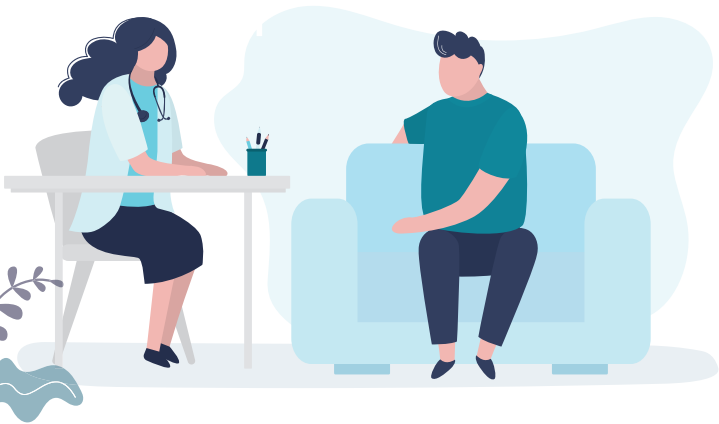
The fertility nurse will take the sample immediately to the laboratory at Merrion Fertility Clinic. There, the identity is checked again and the sample is analysed by a laboratory staff member. We will telephone the next day to inform you and/or your parent(s)/guardian(s) if there was sufficient sperm to freeze.

Sometimes, depending on the number and quality of the sperm in the first sample, it may be recommended that you produce a second one on another day.

Your sperm sample is diluted with a special medium which helps protect it during the freezing process. It is then stored in plastic straws, carefully marked with your details.

## How do I use this sperm in the future?

You will need to have an appointment at Merrion fertility Clinic to discuss fertility treatment. During the freezing process, the quality and motility of the sperm may be affected and treatments such as intrauterine insemination or IVF will usually be required.



## How long is the sperm stored?

Sperm can be stored for many years. Just before you reach 18 years of age, you will be contacted by Merrion Fertility Clinic and asked to have an appointment to update your consent forms and discuss further storage of your sperm.

If it is deemed necessary to continue to store your sperm, storage fees will be covered by Merrion Fertility Clinic until you reach 30 years of age. After that, there may be a charge for storage (currently €300 per year). However, we hope that by that time, there will be public funding for this.

## Who Can Use the Sperm Sample?

Only you, the person who produces the sample, can use it.

## Is there anything else I need to know?

Even though you have had cancer treatment, your fertility may not be affected. Like every other young person you should follow the usual advice about contraception and practising safe sex.

## If you have any questions:

You can ask to speak with a nurse, a doctor or a laboratory staff member at Merrion Fertility Clinic.

Telephone: **(01) 556 7900**

Email: **[info@merrionfertility.ie](mailto:info@merrionfertility.ie)**