



**merrion**  
FERTILITY CLINIC

# Information for Parents & Adolescents about Oocyte Vitrification

CAYA (Childhood, Adolescent  
and Young Adults) Patient  
Information





## Why is it Important to Know about Egg 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 may affect your fertility.

Fertility in women requires healthy eggs. Your eggs are stored in your ovaries. Some cancer treatments (chemotherapy, radiotherapy) may increase the likelihood of damage to your ovaries and stop them from releasing healthy eggs. This effect may be temporary or permanent. Sometimes the treatment may also affect the uterus [womb].

It is reassuring to know that for some young people with a cancer diagnosis, there is an option to freeze eggs before starting treatment to preserve your fertility for the future.

Whether or not you are suitable to have your eggs frozen will depend on several medical issues and test results. These will be discussed in detail with you and your parents at your fertility appointment.

## **What is Fertility Preservation?**

Fertility preservation means the use of methods to protect a person's fertility before planned treatments that would negatively affect fertility. In boys, this involves freezing sperm and in girls, freezing eggs or ovarian tissue.

## **What you need to do if you decide to freeze your eggs.**

The team looking after you at Children's Health Ireland (CHI) Crumlin (or your local hospital) will discuss fertility preservation with you and your parents. If you decide to go ahead, they will contact Merrion Fertility Clinic.

When you come to Merrion Fertility Clinic, one of our nurses will meet you to do a scan and take a blood test. These are to help to assess the health of your ovaries and how many potential eggs they contain. The blood test also ensures there is no risk of infections such as Hepatitis or HIV in any eggs that might be frozen. You must have a full bladder for the scan, so drink some fluids in the hour prior to the scan time and don't go to the toilet unless you really have to.

You will then meet with a doctor who will review and discuss your results and explain egg freezing in more detail. If your doctors feel that egg freezing is medically suitable for you and if this is something you wish to do, you will then have another appointment with one of our nurses to go through the next steps, which are shown in the diagram.

# Egg freezing: what are the steps?



## 1. Blood Test & Scan

Performed by one of our nurses, helps to assess how many potential eggs are in your ovaries. You must have a full bladder for the scan.



## 2. Doctor Consultation

Review and discuss your results to decide with your doctors if egg freezing is a medically suitable option for you and if this is something you wish to do.



## 3. Nurse Appointment

One of our nurses will explain egg freezing in detail and you will complete a consent form. You will be given a prescription for the medication that you will need to make your ovaries produce eggs and the nurse will show you how to take this - it comes as a small pen and is given as a small injection. The nurse will show you how to do the injections yourself.



## 4. Stimulation

You will take injections for 8 to 12 days to stimulate your ovaries to produce eggs. Usually, you develop one egg each month. The medication should make your ovaries produce more eggs so that several can hopefully be frozen.



## 5. Monitoring

You will have 2-5 scans and some blood tests over the next 12 days or so to check the development of the follicles (little sacs on your ovaries that contain potential eggs).



## 6. Trigger Injection

When your follicles are the correct size, an injection is used to trigger the eggs to mature. An egg collection procedure is scheduled for 36 hours after the trigger injection.



## 7. Egg Collection

A doctor will remove the eggs in the clinic while you are asleep (under sedation). In this short procedure, a small needle is passed through the vagina into your ovaries. Fluid in each follicle is drained to collect the potential egg. You usually go home 1-2 hours later. Before you leave, we will tell you if we got eggs and how many were collected.



## 8. Egg Freezing & Storage

Our laboratory staff will call you the day after egg collection to confirm how many eggs were suitable to freeze.

## How do I use my eggs in the future?

After you have completed your cancer treatment, we recommend that you have a fertility assessment with us, usually when you are over 18. This is to see whether your fertility has been affected. If it has, you may need to use your eggs in the future. This would involve IVF treatment. Sometimes your ovaries may not be as badly affected as anticipated and then you may be able to get pregnant naturally.

However, all of this is in the future and there is no need to be concerned about it at this stage. We will arrange follow up appointments when you have completed your cancer treatment. We will need to see you when you are 18, as we will need to update your consent forms at that stage.



## Who can use the Eggs?

Only you, the person who produced the eggs, can use them.

## Is there a cost?

Sadly, fertility preservation for people under 18 is not currently covered under the public health system in Ireland. However, Merrion Fertility Clinic has a grant to provide egg freezing free of charge, if you are deemed medically suitable. We also cover storage fees for the eggs until you turn 30. After that, the current charge for storage is €300 per year. However, we hope that, very soon, there will be public funding for all of this.

## 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](tel:015567900)

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



**Phone: +353 1 556 7900**

60 Lower Mount Street,  
Dublin 2, Ireland

