



# Sperm Freezing

Information for Parents and Adolescents

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# What is Sperm Freezing?

Sperm freezing is when a sample of semen (which contains sperm) is collected and frozen so it can be used later in life. The sperm is prepared into straws and is stored safely in liquid nitrogen at Merrion Fertility Clinic in Dublin. It can stay frozen for many years, and when the time is right, it can be thawed and used as part of fertility treatment to help you become a parent, should you wish to in the future.

## Why Might Someone Freeze Their Sperm?

There are different reasons why someone might want to freeze their sperm. A common reason is to protect fertility for medical reasons. Some conditions or medical treatments, like chemotherapy or surgery, can affect the cells in the testicles that produce sperm. This might make it harder or even impossible to produce sperm in the future. If this happens, it can make it difficult to have children later on.

## How Can Freezing Help?

Freezing sperm before your body is affected by illness or treatment gives you more options for the future. If you're ever unable to produce a healthy sample later on, your frozen sperm may still be used in treatment. This can offer peace of mind at a time when you're dealing with other big decisions.

## What Happens If You Decide to Freeze Sperm?

If sperm freezing is something you're thinking about, the doctors and nurses will talk with you and your parent/guardian about your options.

Whether sperm freezing is right for you will depend on:

- Your medical condition or treatment
- The results of any tests you've had
- What you feel comfortable with

All of this will be explained in full during your appointment at the fertility clinic.

# Sperm Freezing Steps

## 1 Discussion with Your Consultant

To freeze sperm for medical reasons, you need to be under the care of a consultant. Your consultant will talk with you (and your parent/guardian, if needed) to explain the process and decide if sperm freezing is a suitable option for you.



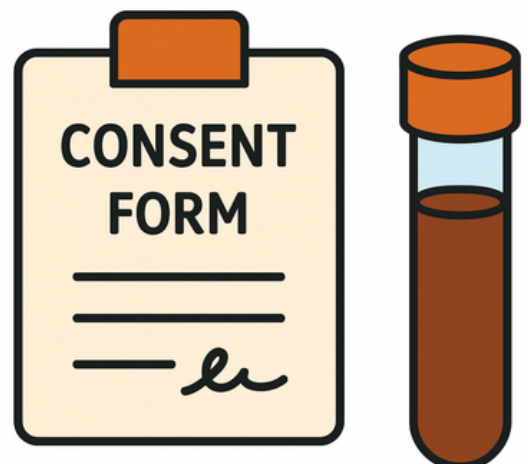
## 2 Referral to Merrion Fertility Clinic

If you decide to go ahead, your consultant will refer you to Merrion Fertility Clinic. The clinic will then arrange your appointment and guide you through the process.

## 3 Blood Test & Consent Form

Before freezing your sperm, you'll need to:

- Have a blood test to check for infections like Hepatitis or HIV (this is to protect the safety of your stored sample).
- Sign a consent form. This confirms that you're happy for your sperm to be frozen and stored.





# Sperm Freezing Steps

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## Meeting the Fertility Nurse

You'll meet with a fertility nurse from Merrion Fertility Clinic. They'll go over your details, make sure everything is clear, and answer any questions.



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## Providing the Sample

Before you give your sample, your identity will be checked and all your details confirmed by the fertility nurse to make sure everything is correct and safe. You'll then be brought to a private, quiet room to provide your sample by masturbating into a sterile container given to you by the clinic. The fluid you produce is called semen, and it contains sperm. When you are ready you can leave the jar in the room and a member of the lab team will collect it.



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## Processing and Freezing

A laboratory staff member will examine the sample. The team will then prepare it for freezing using a special process that protects the sperm. The sample is then frozen in small straws, which are placed in liquid nitrogen inside one of our storage tanks. Each straw is safely and clearly labelled with your details.



## What Happens After?

The next day, someone from the clinic will phone you or your parent(s)/guardian(s) to let you know if there was enough sperm to freeze.

Sometimes, based on the quality or number of sperm in the first sample, you may be asked to return on another day to provide a second one.



## How Will I Use the Sperm in the Future?

If you decide to use your frozen sperm later on, you'll need to book an appointment at Merrion Fertility Clinic to talk about fertility treatment options.

It's important to know that freezing and thawing can affect the quality and movement (motility) of the sperm. Because of this, you may need treatments like:

- IVF (In Vitro Fertilisation) involves collecting eggs and sperm and combining them outside the body to help achieve pregnancy.
- ICSI (Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection) is a specialised form of IVF where a single sperm is injected directly into an egg.

## Who Can Use My Sperm?

Only you, the person who produced the sperm, can use the sample.

No one else is allowed to use it, even with permission.

## How Long Can My Sperm Be Stored?

Your sperm can be stored for many years, so there's no pressure to use it within a certain time. When you turn 18, Merrion Fertility Clinic will contact you to update your consent forms and discuss continued storage. After that, the clinic will check in with you once a year to ask if you'd like to keep your sperm stored.

## Is there a cost?

Unfortunately, fertility preservation for people under 18 is not currently covered by the public health system in Ireland. This means there is a fee for the procedure and ongoing storage of your sperm.

You can find the most up-to-date costs on our price list, which we're happy to share with you or your parent/guardian at any time.

## Why Contraception Still Matters

Even if you've been diagnosed with a medical condition that may affect your fertility, it's important to remember that fertility varies from person to person. A diagnosis of reduced fertility doesn't mean you can't father a child naturally. That's why, if you're having sex and not looking to father a child, you shouldn't rely on having reduced fertility as a form of contraception. It's still important to use effective contraception. Practising safe sex also helps protect both you and your partner from sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

## What if I Have Questions?

The staff at Merrion Fertility Clinic are here to assist you with any additional questions you may have.

Reception: (01) 556 7900

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with compassion,  
honesty & trust**