

Preserving Sperm Before Your Cancer Treatment

What you need to know

This handout explains the process of preserving sperm before having treatment for cancer.

Why should I preserve my sperm?

Cancer, and some forms of cancer treatment, can affect your ability to create healthy sperm. For some men, this ability returns months or years after treatment is finished. But, some men remain *infertile* (unable to produce healthy sperm that can cause a pregnancy), or unable to ejaculate sperm.

If you think you want to have children in the years ahead, you may want to consider having your sperm preserved for later use. We provide this service to men who hope to have children in the future, who are scheduled to have certain types of radiation, chemotherapy, or surgery. These treatments may affect your ability to produce healthy sperm.

How is sperm preserved?

The Male Fertility Laboratory at University of Washington Medical Center (UWMC) offers sperm or semen freezing (*cryopreservation*) for long-term storage and future use. Our cryopreservation service is safe, reliable, tailored to your individual needs, and of the highest quality.

At your appointment at the Men's Health Center, we will collect your semen for a semen analysis, a *test freeze* (when possible), and cryopreservation. For a test freeze, we will freeze and then thaw some of your sperm.

The semen analysis and test freeze will show us how well cryopreservation will work for you. If we find that sperm *viability* (survival) or *motility* (ability to swim) is poor after your semen sample is thawed, we may ask for another sample and try different methods of freezing to see if we get better results.



Large tanks filled with liquid nitrogen keep sperm frozen and safe for at least 75 years.

UWMC's Male Fertility Lab is proud to be a member of **LIVESTRONG**, which provides support and information to men with cancer.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

UWMC Male Fertility Lab:
206-543-4671
www.malefertilitylab.com

Next Steps?

After your cryopreservation and therapy are completed, you may wish to talk with the medical staff at Men's Health Center about your next steps.

UWMC Men's Health Center: 206-598-6358

How is sperm used after thawing?

Sperm may be used many years in the future for conceiving children. This may be done by *cervical insemination* (when sperm are placed in the upper part of the vagina), *intra-uterine insemination* (when sperm are placed into the uterus) or *in vitro fertilization* (when sperm are placed in a dish with the eggs). The method used depends on sperm quality, your partner's fertility status, and your doctor's recommendation.

If you want to use, transfer, or dispose of cryopreserved samples, you or your legal representative must contact the Male Fertility Lab directly. You may want to include your wishes for the use of your sperm in a *living will* (a legal document stating your wishes if you are no longer able to make or express your desires).

What do I need to do next?

- It is best to schedule your appointments before you begin your cancer treatment, when possible. To make your appointment, you or your representative may call the Male Fertility Lab at 206-543-4671.
- You will need to sign a consent form and a legal statement. These forms:
 - Explain the cryopreservation process and its risks and benefits
 - Name the person who will receive your frozen sperm
 - Specify how your sperm will be used
- You will be given these forms to sign at Men's Health Center at your first appointment. You can also download the forms and more detailed information from www.malefertilitylab.com:
 - Click on the "Forms" tab.
 - Near the top of the page, click "ConsentCryo&LegalStatement.pdf."
- If you need to schedule a follow-up appointment for more semen samples to be taken, call the Lab at 206-543-4671.

What is the cost of cryopreservation?

- Your first cryopreservation procedure with semen analysis costs about \$450. This includes on-site storage for 1 year. Extra samples cost about \$30 less. (Please note: These prices may change without notice. Your costs may differ based on your situation.)
- Beginning 1 year after your first cryopreservation, there is an annual \$268 storage fee as long as any samples remain. Over time, annual storage of cryopreserved sperm is the largest expense.
- You may qualify for a lower price for your cryopreservation. Learn more at the **LIVESTRONG** Fertility website, www.livestrong.org/we-can-help/fertility-services.