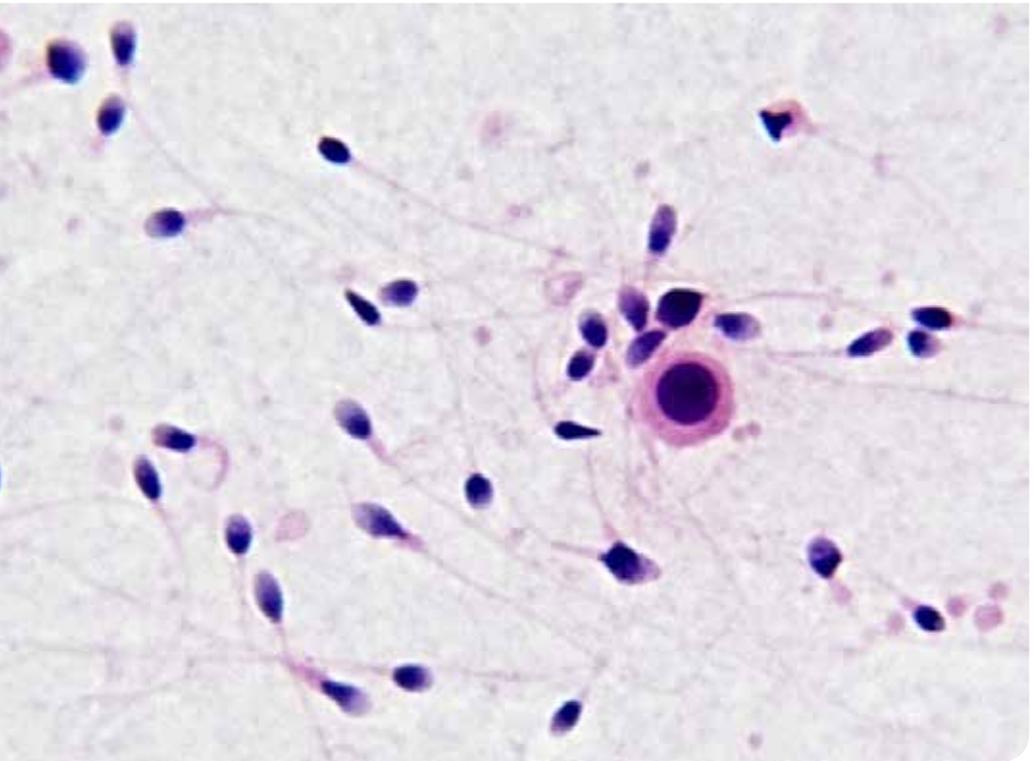


## Storage of sperm prior to treatment for cancer



**Cytology**

## Cancer and fertility: a guide for men

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This leaflet is aimed at men considering cryopreservation of semen. It will provide information on:

- Whether it is necessary to cryopreserve your samples
- What sperm banking means
- Whether your samples are suitable
- How long they are stored for
- The success of conception with frozen sperm
- What happens to your samples if they are not used by you.
- Counselling
- Practical issues about collection and delivery of samples

You have recently been told that you are going to need treatment for your cancer. There are different treatment options that you may need. These can be chemotherapy, radiotherapy or surgery or a combination of these. Each option may damage your future ability to father a child naturally. You will have been given some information to read about cancer and infertility (The Cancerbackup fact sheet). This leaflet will offer you some additional local information about sperm banking.

The choice to have fertility treatment is yours. We can offer you advice and information about the procedure involved in sperm banking and refer you, if you wish to a specialist fertility centre at the Woking Nuffield for fertility counselling.

## Sperm banking

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### **Why does my sperm need to be stored?**

Cancer itself in some cases can cause lower number of sperm being produced and also in some cases infertility. Cancer treatments can also sometimes lower the number of sperm produced leading to infertility. In the majority of cases this is only temporary and the sperm count will return to normal within two years of finishing treatment.

However, for a number of men who receive Chemotherapy and/or Radiotherapy, the sperm count will not recover, resulting in permanent infertility. Successful sperm banking before treatment can preserve the possibility of fathering a child at a later date using the stored sperm should this happen to you.

### **What is sperm banking?**

Sperm banking is the preservation of sperm by freezing and storing in a liquid nitrogen tank so that it may be used at some time in the future for assisted conception.

### **Are all samples suitable?**

The sperm sample will be suitable as long as there are live sperm present and is usually stored prior to treatment.

Storing sperm of good quality gives a realistic chance of fathering a child at a later date through assisted conception. However, no pregnancy is guaranteed. Occasionally, due to illness, sperm quality may have deteriorated. Freezing and thawing the sperm may also damage them.

The cytology lab will do a 'control' freeze and thaw of your sperm if possible to see how the sperm cope with the process. Your consultant will inform you of these results.

You can be reassured that you cannot pass on cancer to a partner via your sperm and there has been no link seen between children conceived after chemotherapy and problems at birth or in the baby's development.

### **How long are samples stored?**

They are stored until they are required. The limits on storage time are defined by law. Initially we store the samples for 10 years and review every 10 years after that. They can be kept for a maximum of 55 years provided we have a letter from a medical practitioner stating that your fertility is compromised following your treatment. You will need to notify us on an annual basis as to whether you wish to continue having your sperm stored.

## **How successful is conception using frozen sperm?**

Success depends upon the quality of the sperm stored, but providing your partner has no fertility issues themselves, then there is a good chance of success, although this cannot be guaranteed.

## **What other implications are there?**

There are statutory regulations regarding sperm banking and your consent in writing is required. The following points also need to be considered:

- How long do you want to store your samples
- Are your samples to be used only for insemination of your wife/partner
- Can your samples be used for research
- What you would like to do with the stored samples in the event of your premature death or mental incapacity.

## **What happens to my samples if I do not use them?**

They will remain in storage provided we receive instructions from you. If the samples are to be disposed of, they will be thawed and allowed to perish. Each year you will be sent a form to complete if you wish to continue with storage.

**If you have any change in your circumstances or personal life that will alter the way in which your sperm could be used, it is very important that you inform us straight away. For example, change of partner, change of GP or address.**

## **Withdrawing consent**

You can withdraw consent for storage at any time. You are also able to change your consent form if your circumstances change. We reserve the right to dispose of samples with no consent.

It is important that you communicate with us on a regular basis letting us know of a change of address etc.

## Confidentiality and disclosure of information

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We have a legal duty of confidentiality imposed on us by Section 33 of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990. All staff adhere to this and information regarding your preserved samples will only be released with your consent

## Counselling

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The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Association (HFEA) require that the blood of men storing sperm is screened for HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HTLV 1/11 (Human T cell Lymphotropic Virus). This is to preserve the safety of any future partners and children conceived using the sperm. It is also to ensure that your sperm is stored in the correct liquid nitrogen tank.

In the unlikely event that you test positive for any of these viruses, counselling and advice will be given. This does not mean that you can not still store your sperm, but alternative storage tanks are required. You will be given the opportunity to discuss all aspects of sperm storage with your specialist oncology nurse or counsellor. You will be offered the opportunity to be referred to a specialist fertility counsellor at The Woking Nuffield prior to sperm banking. You will also be offered the opportunity to be referred to the fertility counsellor at the Woking Nuffield via your consultant, nurse specialist or GP if you decide to use your sperm in the future. Treatment options will be discussed with you then. All these services are confidential.

## Practical issues in depositing your sperm

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- You should complete and sign all your forms before bringing them together with your specimen in the laboratory.
- We prefer you to store 3 specimens. This gives you the optimum number of samples for future use.
- You should not ejaculate for at least 48 hours prior to producing your first specimen. If there is time, leave 48 hours between each sample.

- Depositing your sperm is done via masturbation into a container preferably at home or in a private room on Onslow ward. You will be given complete privacy to do this and your partner may accompany you if you wish.
- Do not use soap or shampoo around the genital area prior to collection as this may damage the sperm.
- Do not use conventional condoms to collect your sample as these contain spermicide.

A collecting condom is available. If you wish to use one please ask.

## Reference source

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- The Human Fertilisation Embryology Authority (HFEA)

## Where do I have to deliver my sample?

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Please bring your sample to 'Pathology 2' (Lavis Suite, highlighted in red on the map opposite) between 8:45 to 15:30 **within one hour** of production, keeping the sample at body temperature (an inside coat pocket is ideal).

### **Please contact the lab prior to delivering a sample by telephoning:**

**Cytology office on 01483 571122 ext 4260/4890** or Direct line **01483 406615**. Ask for a member of the Cryo team.

## How do I know if my fertility has returned?

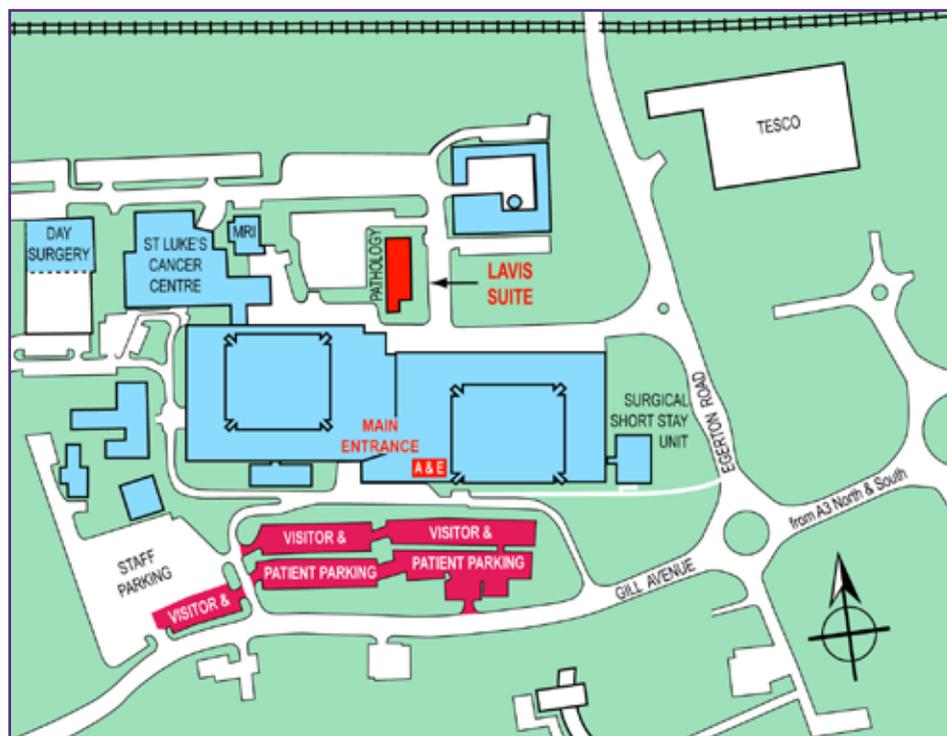
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We can check the number and motility of your sperm at any time after your treatment has been finished for 6 months. Please contact your consultant or GP if you wish your fertility to be checked.

You can also email them at [rsc-tr.cryopreservation@nhs.net](mailto:rsc-tr.cryopreservation@nhs.net).

**If you have any problems or queries, please do not hesitate to ask any member of the team.**

## Map









Royal Surrey County Hospital (RSCH) NHS Foundation Trust fully subscribes to the National Patient Safety Agency (NPSA) *Being Open* best practice framework, November 2010.

### **PALS and Advocacy contact details**

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Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located in far left corner as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

**Telephone:** 01483 402757

**Email:** [rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Opening hours:** 9.00am–4.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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**PIN120909–069**

