

## **Information for patients**

### **Sperm freezing**

Wales Fertility Institute is pleased to provide a cryopreservation service to store frozen sperm for future use. We currently provide storage for patients who are due to undergo surgery, radiotherapy, chemotherapy or whose future potential fertility may be compromised. In addition we back up freeze for a limited number of patients receiving fertility treatment.

You are not able to self refer to this service, a referral will be sent to us by one of the clinicians involved with your treatment. In addition you will be required to be screened for a range of infectious agents. These are HIV, Hepatitis B and C, Syphilis, Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea, in addition we will also require HTLV I&II if you are considered to be at high risk of exposure.

As soon as the laboratory has received all of your screening test results, they will contact you to arrange a convenient time for you to attend for storage. We need to screen you prior to storage as your samples will be stored in tanks of Liquid Nitrogen containing up to another 140 patient's samples. There is a very small risk that an infective agent could pass between samples through the Liquid Nitrogen. By screening all patients prior to storage for the most common infective agents and now by using CBS high security straws for the storage of sperm samples, we are minimising the risks to all concerned.

### **Things you need to consider**

When banking sperm you will find out more about your potential fertility. One in ten men has a fertility problem and one in fifty men ejaculate no sperm at all. In the event of the laboratory finding no sperm in your sample, we will be unable to store. The laboratory is able to put you in contact with a counsellor if you would like to speak to one.

You will be asked to decide if you wish to let a named partner/wife have treatment with your sperm even in the event of your death. Alternatively you can decide that if anything happens to you the sperm should be disposed of, this is also the situation if you do not name a partner. You can name a partner/wife at a later date; however you will be required to complete the appropriate forms.

### **What to expect when storing sperm**

- You will be required to abstain from sexual activity for between 2 and 7 days prior to storing your samples. In the event of urgent freezes the laboratory will accept samples that do not fulfil this criteria, however the recommendation will enable us to obtain an optimal sample for storage
- You are required to complete the HFEA GS and CD forms, as well as a Cardiff Cryopreservation of Sperm Consent, if you have a partner you will also be required to complete a MT form. These forms should be given to you by your referring clinician, if not they can be completed at the first appointment
- Your partner will be required to complete a HFEA CD form
- You and your partner (if named) will be required to provide photographic identification

- Ideally we will try to offer you 2 appointments to store your sperm; however we may not be able to achieve this due to the urgent need for you to start your treatment. Where possible we will seek guidance from your clinical team
- The laboratory is located on the Wales Fertility Institute treatment corridor, C1. Maps of the site can be found at:  
<http://www.cardiffandvaleuhb.wales.nhs.uk/opendoc/194641>  
<http://www.cardiffandvaleuhb.wales.nhs.uk/opendoc/141072>

### **On the day of storage**

- Your partner is welcome to attend the appointment with you
- Please aim to arrive at the laboratory promptly for your appointment, if you are delayed please let us know so that we can adjust our schedule with other patients
- On arrival at the laboratory, you will be asked to wait in the waiting area until an Andrologist is available to see you
- You will be asked to go to a consulting room with the Andrologist, who will then check through the forms you have completed or will provide advice to help you complete the forms if you have not already done so
- The Andrologist will photocopy your photographic identification and also the Cryopreservation Consent form
- The Andrologist will answer any questions that you may have
- You will then be shown to a private room where you will be given a container labelled with your details to produce your sample into
- The private room contains adult magazines that some patients may find helpful when producing their samples
- Legally young men under the age of 18 are not allowed to be provided with adult material, therefore all magazines are removed from the room
- Once you have collected your sample, you will be asked to complete another form. This is to confirm that it is your sample, where it has been collected, if the whole sample was collected and how long you abstained before producing the sample
- You are then free to leave, if a second appointment for storage is required this will be confirmed with you
- The Andrologist will take your sample, assess the volume, sperm concentration and motility
- Unfortunately if no sperm are present in the sample, the sample cannot be stored
- After storage is completed, we will send you a letter confirming the total number of straws stored and the year that consent expires. Where you have consented to us contacting other healthcare professionals, we will also send a copy of this to the referring clinician

### **Important things to remember after you have stored**

- Your consent forms will remain in force until they are changed in writing
- You can withdraw your consent at any time
- To be able to legally keep your samples in storage, we are required to have up to date contact details for you. If we are unable to contact you, we are unable to keep your samples in storage
- We will start to contact you 12 months before your consent is due to expire, We will make 3 attempts to contact you by recorded mail

- If you need to make any changes to your consents or contact detail, contact us on 02920743055 and we will advise you on how to proceed
- The laboratory recommends that you get your fertility checked after your treatment has been completed. Due to the toxic nature of some of the treatments, we recommend that you wait for 12 months before doing this

### **How your sample is stored**

- Once the Andrologist has assessed your sample, they will decide how many straws the sample can be stored in. The aim is that one straw should contain sufficient sperm for a treatment cycle
- A cryo-protectant is then added to the sample to prevent the formation of ice crystals in the freezing process which can damage the sperm
- The sample is split into straws which are then heat sealed to protect the sample in storage
- The samples are then frozen and stored at -196°C in Liquid Nitrogen
- For oncology patients and those undergoing treatment which has the potential to reduce fertility, the sample will be split between two storage vessel to minimise the risks to the samples
- Whilst the laboratory will do everything possible to minimise the risk to your samples, we are unable to guarantee that your sperm will survive the freeze/thaw process.

### **Future use of your stored sperm**

Wales Fertility Institute would be happy to give advice on fertility treatments and address any other fertility related concerns you may have.

We are also able to assist you with transferring your stored sample to another Clinic if you require this.