Information about
The Storage of Sperm, Eggs and Embryos before starting Chemo or Radiotherapy Treatment

Assisted Conception Services
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Introduction
The Assisted Conception Service (ACS) at Glasgow Royal Infirmary offers services for people whose fertility may be affected by their cancer treatment.

For men
If you have reached puberty and are about to undergo chemotherapy or radiotherapy, you may wish to consider storing your sperm for future use.

If you choose to store your sperm, the Consultant in charge of your treatment will arrange an appointment for you at ACS. They will also arrange for blood samples to test you for HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C. The results of those tests must be available to ACS before you attend for your appointment.

Do not have sex for 48-72 hours before your appointment. At your appointment you will be seen by a doctor who will help you to complete the consent forms and storage forms. These are, required by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) and EU regulations.

Once you have signed your consent forms, you will be asked to make an appointment for 6 months time to discuss the results of your blood tests and future use of your sperm.

After signing the forms we will show you into a private room in the Embryology Laboratory to produce your sample. Your sample will then be examined and if suitable placed in frozen storage. We will send you a letter detailing your sperm’s quality and the amount that has been placed in storage. (Please note that sperm quality is affected by a number of factors e.g. your general health).

Sperm in frozen storage may be used in assisted conception treatments e.g. IVF and can be stored, in certain circumstances, for up to 55 years. However, you will be contacted at least every 10 years to confirm your wishes regarding the stored sample. At this point, a medical practitioner must determine whether your fertility remains impaired and if this is the case, that storage is still appropriate. It is your responsibility to keep us informed of any change in your contact details.
Please note that 10-15% of patients, who successfully complete a course of chemotherapy or radiotherapy, may be able to use fresh sperm if it’s of a good quality rather than frozen sperm for any assisted conception treatment required.

For Women
There are two different types of storage available:

1. Embryo Storage
If you have reached puberty, and are about to undergo chemotherapy or radiotherapy and have a partner, you may be offered In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) treatment. This means creating embryos (fertilised eggs) which can then be stored for use in later years.

IVF involves the collection of eggs directly from the ovaries (using a specially designed needle), then mixing them with sperm in a sterile dish. This is where fertilisation occurs and embryos (fertilised eggs) are produced.

If you decide to store your embryos, an appointment will be made for the Assisted Conception Services. At your first appointment, you will be seen by a member of the medical and nursing team. They will:

• discuss the treatment
• answer any questions or concerns you have
• help you complete the consent forms and storage forms

To increase the success rate of this treatment, more eggs are required than the one or two that are usually produced naturally each month. This means you will receive daily injections of a hormone to increase the number of eggs you produce. Please note that this treatment can take up to 6 weeks to complete and this may result in a delay of your cancer treatment. You should discuss this with your Consultant.
The embryo(s) produced using this procedure may be stored for up to 10 years or, in some circumstances, even longer. Please note if you have embryos in storage and you change address or have a new partner you must tell us immediately for us to be able to keep accurate records of all patients whose embryos we keep in storage. This is to comply with HFEA and EU regulations.

2. Egg storage
If you have reached puberty, and are about to undergo chemotherapy or radiotherapy and do not have a partner or do not wish to store embryos (fertilised eggs), you may be able to store your eggs for future use.

If you decided to store your eggs, an appointment will be made for the Assisted Conception Services. At your first appointment, you will be seen by a member of the medical and nursing team. They will:

- discuss the treatment
- answer any questions or concerns you have
- help you complete the consent forms and storage forms

The treatment requires you to receive daily hormone injections to encourage your ovaries to produce more eggs than you would normally. We will then collect your eggs from your ovaries, (using a specially designed needle) and place them in frozen storage. When the time comes, your eggs can be thawed and be fertilised using your partner’s sperm to create embryos (fertilised eggs).

The law states that unfertilised eggs can be stored for up to 10 years. It may be possible to extend this time period up to 55 years if you:

- become infertile
- are likely to be following certain treatments (e.g. chemotherapy for cancer).
Please note:

• Not all of the stored eggs will survive the freezing and thawing procedure, and that there is no guarantee that fertilisation will successfully take place.

• This treatment can take up to 6 weeks to complete and this may result in a delay of your cancer treatment. You should discuss this with your Consultant.

If you move address or have a new partner you must tell us immediately for us to be able to keep accurate records of all patients whose eggs we keep in storage. This is to comply with HFEA and EU regulations.