



***Semen
cryostorage
(MESA)***

***Information for
patients and carers***

**Fertility Centre
Aberdeen Maternity Hospital**

This leaflet is to provide you with information regarding the freezing and storing in liquid nitrogen (known as “cryostorage”) of any sperm samples that are retrieved by the surgical procedure (MESA or TESA). You will have the opportunity to discuss this procedure with the doctor before your operation is arranged. You should talk to the doctor about any questions you may have concerning the surgery.

What happens before my operation?

All storage and use of human sperm is regulated by the Human Fertilisation Embryology Authority (HFEA). The Fertility Centre is licensed by the HFEA to store sperm. Before your operation your consultant or doctor will have first arranged for you to have a blood test to screen for HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C. This is a requirement of the HFEA to minimise the risk of spreading any infection within the storage tanks

When a negative screening result is obtained, you will be given a date for your operation. You will also be sent an appointment to meet with the laboratory staff to complete and sign the HFEA forms consenting to the storage, use and disposal of your samples. This consent form includes a question about what you want to happen to your stored sperm if you should die or become mentally incapacitated. The options to consider are whether you would wish the semen samples to be disposed of, whether you would wish them to remain in storage for your partner to use or if you wish to allow their use in training or research. It can be useful to discuss this as a couple before you attend.

If you will be having privately funded IVF treatment in the future, you will be asked to pay for the storage of your samples. The clinic staff will provide details. We will send you an invoice for this payment which you must pay before your operation.

What happens on the day of the operation?

Any samples recovered during your operation will be taken across to the Andrology Laboratory where they will be assessed. Later that day the doctor will be able to tell you if any motile sperm were present in your sample and if they were frozen.

You should be aware that there is a possibility that no motile sperm will be retrieved or that no sperm will be found. If that is the case the doctor will let you know.

What happens to the sample?

The sample will be mixed with a solution to protect the sperm through the processes of freezing and thawing before being divided in small amounts (straws) for freezing. The number of straws that you will have in storage will depend on the volume of the sample. A few days later one straw will be defrosted to test how well the sample has survived. This will let us know if the frozen sperm will be suitable for use in fertility treatment and this information should be available in about 1 week.

What happens next?

If the procedure has been successful you will have a telephone appointment to discuss your onward referral for IVF.

If the procedure was unsuccessful you will be sent a review appointment for about 6 to 8 weeks after the procedure to allow time for all test results to be available.

How long can the sample be kept?

Your sample can be stored for up to 10 years in the first instance. If after 10 years your fertility treatment is not completed and the medical staff agree that your treatment should continue, then the storage can be extended by 10 year intervals up to a maximum of 55 years' storage.

We will contact you every year to ask if you want the sperm storage to continue. Please sign the form we send you and return it to the laboratory as soon as possible.

You must keep in touch with the laboratory and keep us informed of any change of address. If we cannot contact you or if we do not hear from you, we will have to assume that you do not wish us to continue storing your sperm. We will then dispose of your stored sperm.

If a storage extension is required, you will be sent an appointment to complete the necessary forms.

Is there anything else that we need to know?



Freezing and thawing diminishes the fertility of a semen sample. If you request to use your frozen sample we will usually assess the quality of a defrosted sample. We cannot offer a guarantee of a subsequent pregnancy, even though sperm has been successfully stored. We tell you this so that you might be prepared for any disappointment later.

We cannot be held liable if there is any problem during the storage period which renders the sperm non-viable (for example a problem with the storage tank, or a fire on the premises). This is extremely unlikely but you should be aware of this possibility.

Contact telephone number

If you have any questions about semen cryostorage please contact:

**Andrology Laboratory
Aberdeen Fertility Centre**

 (01224) 553211 

This leaflet is also available in large print and on computer disk.

Other formats and languages can be supplied on request. For a copy please call Quality Development on (01224) 554149. Ask for leaflet 0132.

Feedback from the public helped us to develop this leaflet. If you have any comments on how we can improve it, please call (01224) 554149 to let us know.