

Fertility Preservation for Adolescents & Young Adults Starting Cancer Treatments

Identifying as Male at Birth



Cancer treatments may impact your ability to have children. This can be a deeply personal and life-changing outcome. Our goal is to provide you, and those who support you, with information about fertility preservation to help you make informed decisions about your care and your ability to have children in the future.

Here you will find details on freezing sperm; and how this process can increase your chances of having children in the future. We realize this information may be overwhelming, but are hopeful these details will support you to make informed decisions in the days ahead.

“ *Surviving is the priority,
but losing purpose is difficult.
Make time for fertility conversations.* ”

— thoughts from a young adult
after navigating cancer treatment

Individuals identifying as male at birth begin to produce sperm once they reach puberty and will continue to do so over their life. Sperm is contained in semen that is released during ejaculation through masturbation or sex.

Cancer treatments (chemotherapy, radiation, surgery, bone marrow transplant) can sometimes damage the cells that make sperm. This can result in lower quality sperm, low sperm count or the loss of ability to produce sperm. Cancer treatments can also cause damage to genital function or testosterone production which can impact your sexual function or fertility after treatments. Your cancer care team can provide you with details on how your treatments may impact your sexual health and your ability to have children.

How does cancer treatment affect fertility?

What can be done to preserve fertility?

Individuals identifying as male at birth can preserve fertility through sperm banking, a process which freezes sperm (cryopreservation) for future use. Sperm banking occurs at a fertility clinic which stores the sperm until you wish to have children. At that time, the sperm are placed in the partner's (or surrogate's) uterus (intra-uterine insemination) or used to fertilize a partner's (or donor's) egg to create an embryo that is then placed in the uterus (in-vitro fertilization).

Freezing sperm **prior to start of treatment** is the most effective option to preserve fertility. This procedure will not be possible during treatment; and after treatment, it may no longer be possible to produce healthy sperm.

Here for you:

Before your first treatment, you and your cancer care team will discuss how your treatments may affect your fertility, your sexual function and your ability to have children. Do not hesitate to ask questions. We are here to support you to make informed decisions about your care and your future.

How are sperm collected?

Sperm are collected by providing semen through masturbation. This is done in the privacy of a dedicated room at a fertility clinic.

If you are unable to leave the hospital, sperm can be collected in the privacy of your room and taken to the fertility clinic. The sperm collected must be frozen within an hour, so distance from the fertility clinic is important.

For many reasons, it may be difficult to produce semen through masturbation. In some circumstances, a urologist can collect sperm during a sedated surgical procedure. This procedure is not an option for individuals who have not reached puberty and do not have mature sperm.

Further, cancer may lower sperm count even before treatment begins. To increase the chance of having viable frozen sperm for the future, you may be asked to abstain from ejaculation for 2-3 days before sperm collection and may be asked to collect sperm more than once.

Let a member of your cancer care team know that you would like to discuss options to preserve fertility. A referral will be made to meet with a Reproductive Endocrine and Infertility (REI) specialist at a private fertility clinic in BC. Your initial meeting with the REI specialist can be in-person or virtual. In that meeting, the REI team will review your medical status, bloodwork, and anticipated treatments for cancer, and will then advise on the best options available to you. They will provide information about the fertility preservation process including timing, risks and benefits, side-effects and costs.

Sperm freezing can only be done at a fertility clinic that offers the full range of preservation services and **travel to the clinic is required unless you are in-hospital and arrangements are made.**

How do I start the process to preserve fertility?

Options after cancer treatment

If it was not possible to undergo sperm banking before the start of cancer treatment, your cancer care team can organize a semen analysis to evaluate your sperm count and sperm health. This usually occurs at least one-year post-treatment.

In BC, most fertility preservation services are not covered by our Medical Services Plan (MSP) and are only offered at private clinics. There is no charge for an initial referral for assessment and discussion.

What are the costs involved?

General costs:

Type	Cost <i>*estimates may vary</i>
Consultation	Covered by MSP
Sperm banking (collection & freezing process)	About \$800
Additional sperm samples	About \$200
Annual storage fee	\$600–800
Future in vitro fertilization	\$8,500
Future intra-uterine insemination	\$600

Private health insurance plans may cover some costs, and the fertility clinics may provide discounts or some services at-cost for patients undergoing fertility preservation due to cancer.

Fertile Future’s Power of Hope Program

(www.fertilefuture.ca 1-877-HOPE-066) provides up to \$350 toward sperm banking for individuals whose household income is less than \$50,000.



Fertility clinics
that offer full
cryopreservation
services in BC

Olive Fertility Centre – Main Centre

300-East Tower, 555 West 12th Avenue

Vancouver, BC V5Z 3X7

Tel: 604-559-9950

Olive Fertility Centre – Victoria

545 Superior Street, Suite 210, Victoria, BC V8V 0C5

Tel: 250-410-1664

<https://www.olivefertility.com>

Other sites are available for initial consultation
in Kelowna, Surrey and Prince George.

Pacific Centre for Reproductive Medicine (PCRM) – Main Centre

500-4601 Canada Way, Burnaby, BC V5G 4X7

Tel: 604-422-7276

<https://pacificfertility.ca>

Another site is available for initial consultation in Victoria.

Other fertility and health centres are available in BC offering services
to support fertility assessment, assisted reproduction and sexual health.



You will likely have questions and may feel overwhelmed by this information. If so, please reach out to your cancer care team or Cancer Centre. We are here to help.

Need
support?

BC Cancer – Abbotsford

Toll-free within BC: 1-877-547-3777

Patient and Family Counselling: 604-851-4733

BC Cancer – Kelowna

Toll-free within BC: 1-888-563-7773

Patient and Family Counselling: 250-712-3963

BC Cancer – Prince George

Toll-free within BC: 1-855-775-7300

Patient and Family Counselling: 250-645-7330

BC Cancer – Surrey

Toll-free within BC: 1-800-523-2885

Patient and Family Counselling: 604-930-4000

BC Cancer – Vancouver

Toll-free within BC: 1-800-663-3333

Patient and Family Counselling: 604-877-6000 ext. 672194

BC Cancer – Victoria

Toll-free within BC: 1-800-670-3322

Patient and Family Counselling: 250-519-5525