PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Sperm Banking

This information answers some common questions about sperm banking. It also has a list of local sperm banks.

What is sperm banking?

Sperm banking is the collection, freezing, and storage of sperm for possible use in the future.

Why should I bank my sperm?

Many cancer treatments damage the cells that grow into sperm. If your body stops making sperm, you will be infertile. This means you will not be able to have a biological child.

Sometimes these cells recover, but sometimes they do not. We can’t know for certain how your treatment will affect your future fertility.

Banking your sperm before treatment will increase your chance of having a child using your own sperm in the future. Even if you are not thinking about building a family now, this may be important to you in the future.

When should I bank my sperm?

You must bank your sperm before you start treatment.

If you don’t need to start treatment right away, we suggest you collect 3 specimens and schedule the collections with 2 to 3 days between them. It’s best if you don’t ejaculate during sex or masturbation for 2 to 5 days before the first collection and between each collection. This will help you collect the most sperm possible.

If you’re starting treatment too soon for this timing, you can start collecting right away and schedule the collections with only 1 day between them. Collecting even just 1 or 2 specimens is helpful because there are new techniques available to fertilize eggs with very few sperm.

If you’re having any scans done using radioactive isotopes (such as a bone scan, PET scan, or MUGA scan), you don’t need to wait until the isotopes are cleared from your body to bank your sperm. You can bank your sperm anytime after your scan. You can also bank sperm if you’re having a computed tomography (CT) scan or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).

Where can I bank my sperm?

Sperm banking is usually done at a licensed laboratory (lab) or fertility center. Some local sperm banks are listed at the end of this resource. Once you choose a sperm bank, call to make your first appointment. Tell them you will be starting cancer treatment at MSK.

If you can’t collect a specimen at a sperm bank, some sperm banks let you collect at home. The sperm bank or your doctor can give you a sterile cup for this.

If you’re in the hospital, you will need to collect the specimen in your hospital room. We can arrange for one of the sperm banks in New York to pick up the specimen for a small fee and take it to their lab for processing.

If you’re having a family member or friend take the specimen from home or the hospital to the sperm bank, the specimen must be delivered within 60 minutes of collection. They should keep it in a pocket close to their body to keep it at body temperature.

How do I bank my sperm?

When you get to the sperm bank, a staff member will bring you to a small private room for the collection. After washing and drying your hands, you will stimulate yourself to ejaculate by masturbating. The fluid that comes out of your penis is called semen, and it contains your sperm. You will collect

the semen in a sterile cup. Do not use saliva (spit) or lubricants to masturbate, as these can destroy the sperm. You can ask for mineral oil if this will help you to ejaculate, but only use it at the base of your penis to avoid mixing it in with your semen.

Some people can't ejaculate by masturbating because they feel too sick, are in too much pain, feel too embarrassed or uncomfortable, or aren't allowed to masturbate because of religious or cultural beliefs. If you can't collect a specimen by masturbating, tell your doctor or nurse. There are other ways to collect sperm, and we can discuss these options with you.

What will the sperm bank do with my specimen?

The sperm bank will analyze your semen, counting the number of sperm. They will divide the specimen into small vials and freeze the sperm for storage. Some sperm die during the freezing and thawing process. The sperm that survive are not damaged while they're frozen.

Sperm can be stored for as long as you want, even for many years. You will have to pay a yearly storage fee as long as the sperm bank holds your specimens. If you're thinking about throwing away your sperm, talk with your doctor first to make sure you will not need any additional treatment. You may want to store your specimens until you finish building your family.

How much will sperm banking cost?

Many insurance plans do not cover sperm banking. The cost is different at each sperm bank and can vary based on location. The cost in the New York area ranges from about $800 to $1,000 for 3 collections, including the first year of storage. After the first year, there will be a yearly fee to keep the specimen frozen.

Many sperm banks offer a discounted rate to people with cancer. A few require you to apply for this through the Livestrong Fertility program. Your eligibility is based on your income. Go to www.livestrong.org/what-we-

do/program/fertility to learn more. To create an account to apply, log on to https://livestrongfertilityportal.unicentric.com.

If the cost of storage after the first year is more than you can afford, you can arrange to move the specimens to another sperm bank. Repro Tech provides discounted rates for long-term storage for people with cancer. Visit their website at www.reprotech.com/financial-assistance.html to learn more.

What else should I know?

Cancer can affect your sperm count even before treatment begins. Ask the sperm bank to contact you or your doctor with your results. They should also let you know if you may not have any sperm that can be used to conceive a child in the future.

You will be given forms to fill out for the sperm bank. These include a form asking what you want to happen to your specimens if you die before you have used them. For example, you can say that you want them thrown away or left to a partner. You can change this information in the future if you change your mind.

The sperm bank may require that you have infectious disease testing done before you bank your sperm. They may do the blood and urine tests there, or they may send you to a local lab. You may need to pay an additional cost for this.

Where can I learn more?

For more information, ask your doctor or nurse for a referral to one of our Fertility Practice Providers.

Finding a sperm bank

Many sperm banks offer a discounted rate for people with cancer. The locations with a star (*) next to their names require you to apply to Livestrong Fertility to get a discounted rate. Go to www.livestrong.org/what-we-do/program/fertility to learn more. To create an account to apply, log on

to https://livestrongfertilityportal.unicentric.com/Login/Index

We last updated this list in February 2024. Some of this information may have changed since then. Once you choose a sperm bank, contact them to make sure they're accepting specimens and schedule an appointment.

Manhattan

MAZE Laboratories *
633 Third Avenue, Suite 9B (between 40th and 41st streets)
New York, NY 10065
914-683-0000 or 914-992-0030

Repro Labs
332 East 30th Street (between First and Second avenues)
New York, NY 10016
212-779-3988

Aligneage Fertility
424 Madison Avenue, Suite 1201 (southwest corner of 49th Street and Madison Avenue)
New York, NY 10017
347-331-4908

Long Island

Island Fertility
Stony Brook Administrative Services, LLC
500 Commack Road, Suite 202
Commack, NY 11725
631-638-4607

Westchester and Upstate NY

MAZE Laboratories *
2975 Westchester Avenue
Purchase, NY 10577
914-683-0000 or 914-992-0030

CNY Fertility
195 Intrepid Lane
Syracuse, NY 13205
315-469-8700

or

38A Old Sparrowbush Road
Latham, NY 12110 (near Albany)
315-469-8700

New Jersey

Reproductive Medicine Associates of New Jersey
140 Allen Road
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920
973-656-2823
You may be able to sperm bank at the Eatontown or Marlton location.

The Sperm and Embryo Bank of New Jersey
187 Mill Lane
Mountainside, NJ 07920
908-654-8836

Pennsylvania

Fairfax Cryobank *
3401 Market Street, Suite 205
Philadelphia, PA 19104
215-386-1977

Connecticut

Illume Fertility
761 Main Avenue, Suite 200
Norwalk, CT 06851
203-956-2265

If you have any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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