Cancer treatments can cause infertility.

Know your fertility preservation options.
An Important & Necessary Conversation

Fertility preservation can be the last thing on a person’s mind as they navigate the challenges of cancer. Many treatments used to defeat cancer can impact fertility, but reproductive technologies have given children, adolescents, and young adults hope that their reproductive material (eggs, sperm, or reproductive tissue) can be saved for future reproduction, if and when they decide they want children. Fertility preservation gives many families a chance to look forward, allowing them to imagine a future beyond cancer where they do not need to lose hope of having a biological child. Studies have shown that childhood cancer survivors express regret if their fertility is affected by prior therapy and they were not counseled at diagnosis and during their treatment. Fertility Within Reach aims to support youth and their families through this journey, expand the options for parenthood, and provide financial support for fertility preservation.
“I wish we would have thought of fertility preservation sooner. It’s hard to wrap your brain around it all when you are thinking of your child’s treatment. But it is important... and gives hope.”

Margaret McDermott
mother of fertility preservation patient
Fertility Preservation

WHAT IS FERTILITY PRESERVATION?
Fertility is the ability to conceive or induce conception naturally. Some cancer treatments, like radiation,* chemotherapy, and surgical removal of reproductive organs, can cause future fertility problems. It is difficult to predict exactly how fertility will be affected by cancer treatments — your risk for infertility depends on your age, cancer type, your type of treatment, the dose and duration of chemotherapy, the dose and location of radiation, and the potential for relapse.

There are ways to protect fertility through fertility preservation. This rapidly advancing field is a safe and dependable method of extracting and storing a person’s reproductive material (eggs, sperm, or reproductive tissue) until they are ready to access it. Discussions of fertility preservation should begin during consultations for a newly diagnosed patient or a long-term survivor. There are several different options available for fertility preservation, and it’s important to be aware of all the methods available as you decide if fertility preservation is the right choice for you.

FOR NEWLY DIAGNOSED PATIENTS
As a newly diagnosed patient with cancer, fertility preservation may be an option for you. Your healthcare team can review the infertility risks of your recommended treatments.

FOR LONG-TERM SURVIVORS
If you have already completed therapy for cancer, you can ask your long-term survivorship team for information on how your prior therapy might have affected your fertility. In certain situations, chemotherapy, radiation, and/or surgery can cause fertility difficulties and early referral to a specialist to discuss medical options can help increase the chances you will be able to have children in the future. Further discussion is helpful and encouraged, even if you are not currently planning on starting a family.

*See Glossary on page 14 for definition.
Preservation of Male Reproductive Material

Male infertility can be caused by low sperm production (quantity), abnormal (low-quality) sperm function, or damage to the reproductive system leading to the inability to fertilize an egg.

Several forms of fertility preservation options are available for male patients that may allow for a successful pregnancy in the future. If you have gone through puberty, then sperm may be frozen through two options: sperm banking and sperm extraction. The success of fertility preservation depends on the quality and quantity of sperm.

LEAD SHIELDING

Lead shielding involves putting a removable lead barrier, in the form of a drape or blanket, over the testicles during radiation treatment to protect the tissue from damage.

SPERM BANKING

Sperm banking is the simplest and least invasive way of both collecting and preserving male reproductive material. A semen sample is collected through self-stimulation, then checked for quality and frozen. Samples can be frozen indefinitely. It is recommended to offer sperm banking before starting therapy. If you have completed therapy and would like to pursue sperm banking, you should wait a minimum of 12–18 months to ensure the highest quality sperm sample.

TESTICULAR SPERM EXTRACTION

This is a medical procedure for post-pubertal* male patients in which sperm is removed from the testicle under general anesthesia. Samples can be frozen indefinitely and have a high fertility success rate using assisted reproductive technologies including intrauterine insemination (IUI) or in-vitro fertilization (IVF).

TESTICULAR TISSUE CRYOPRESERVATION*

This preservation technique is for pre-pubertal* or post-pubertal male patients. A portion of the testicle is removed under general anesthesia, then preserved and frozen. When the patient is ready to expand their family, the testicular tissue can be thawed, replaced in the body, and can begin producing sperm again. There are minimal risks associated with this procedure, including minor pain, and swelling.

*I See Glossary on page 14 for definition.

I am so beyond happy I did this. Fertility preservation gave me hope of a future and kept me going during treatment.

K.R. fertility preservation patient
Treatment & My Fertility

Your healthcare team will use this space to assess and document your risk of infertility based on the treatment you are to receive or have already received. This section provides you with important information to make an informed decision related to your fertility preservation options.

PREVIOUS TREATMENTS THAT COULD AFFECT FUTURE FERTILITY

Has the patient previously received treatment?
☐ Yes  ☐ No

If Yes, the risk for infertility based on previous treatment:
☐ None  ☐ Minimal  ☐ Moderate  ☐ High

PLANNED TREATMENT THAT COULD AFFECT FUTURE FERTILITY

Chemotherapy:
Classic alkylators as Cyclophosphamide Equivalent Dose (CED) ______________ g/m²

Heavy metals: Cisplatin ______________ mg/m², Carboplatin ______________ mg/m²

Bone marrow transplant / stem cell transplant or gene therapy:
☐ Yes  ☐ No

Total body irradiation (TBI): _________ Gy

Expected cumulative dose of radiation exposure to the testicles:
_____________ Gy

Expected cumulative dose of radiation to the brain (hypothalamus):
_____________ Gy

I am at risk for infertility due to my cancer treatment.
☐ Yes  ☐ No

My risk for infertility is…
☐ None  ☐ Minimal  ☐ Moderate  ☐ High

Recommended fertility preservation options:
☐ Lead shielding
☐ Sperm Cryopreservation
☐ Testicular Sperm Extraction
☐ Testicular tissue cryopreservation
☐ Other _______________________

I need to use protection to prevent a pregnancy:
☐ Yes  ☐ No

If I have children, they are more likely to have a birth defect:
☐ Yes  ☐ No

NOTES

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Parent’s Guide

TALKING TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT FERTILITY PRESERVATION

As a parent, the idea of talking to your adolescent about family building or future fertility during cancer treatment may feel strange or uncomfortable. It might be helpful to keep in mind some of the following when having these conversations:

• Take some time to prepare yourself, and perhaps share your ideas and feelings with a friend, family member, partner, social worker, or therapist ahead of time.

• Don’t rely on a script. Talk as naturally as possible and allow your child to ask questions. Be honest. Sometimes “I don’t know. That’s a good question, and we’ll find out the answer together” is all you can say.

• Share your feelings and emotions without projecting them onto your child.

• Remember that this conversation is the first of many, and the key is laying a foundation for open, honest, and constructive dialogue.

Offer the opportunity for your child to make decisions about their fertility preservation and be included in conversations with their medical team as much as possible.

It is also important to remember that there are no guarantees with cancer treatment. As a parent, you may be faced with the difficult responsibility of discarding reproductive cells. Decisions of ownership are complex and can be emotional. This is a possibility that should be discussed prior to fertility preservation.

Adapted from “For Parents: Talking with Children About Cancer” from Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and “Helping Your Child Adjust to a Cancer Diagnosis” from the American Cancer Society.
Resources

FOR PARENTS

Patient education resources for effects of cancer treatment on fertility:

Save My Fertility  savemyfertility.org
Let’s Take Charge lestakecharge.org
Connecticut Children’s Hospital  connecticutchildrens.org
The Oncofertility Consortium  oncofertility.msu.edu

FOR PATIENTS

CancerCare is a non-profit organization that provides free professional counseling and educational programs to cancer patients. cancercare.org

Lacuna Loft is a non-profit organization that provides age-appropriate online support for adolescent and young adult cancer patients, survivors, and caregivers during and after treatment. lacunaloft.org

Elephants & Tea is a media company that supports adolescent and young adult patients and their families through digital support groups and resources. elephantsandtea.com

Stupid Cancer is a non-profit that ends isolation and rallies a community within the world of adolescent. stupidcancer.org/#

First Descents provides outdoor adventure experiences for adolescents with cancer, including hiking, biking, rock climbing, kayaking, yoga, and surfing retreats. firstdescents.org

b-present aims for every adolescent with cancer to feel celebrated, valued, and supported by their community by working within a patient’s peer and social networks. b-present.org

GLOSSARY

Cryopreservation: Freezing biological material at cryogenic temperatures
Embryo: The product when an egg is fertilized by a sperm
Fertility Preservation: The process of saving or protecting eggs, sperm, embryos, or reproductive tissue so that a person can use them to have biological children in the future
Pre-pubertal: Before puberty
Post-pubertal: After puberty
Radiation: A cancer treatment that uses energy to kill cancer cells and shrink tumors
Reproductive Tissue/Reproductive Material: Cells that are important in the human reproductive system; Examples: sperm, egg, testicular tissue, ovarian tissue

“I’m still a college student and Fertility Within Reach gave me the opportunity to cryobank without breaking the bank.” — H.G., fertility preservation patient
How Banking on the Future Can Help

WHAT IS BANKING ON THE FUTURE?

Fertility Within Reach is a national non-profit dedicated to helping individuals increase access to fertility treatment and preservation, as well as fertility insurance benefits. Our goal is to remove costs as a barrier in someone’s ability to start a family.

For young adults going through cancer treatment, insurance plans rarely cover fertility preservation. As a result, it is not accessible for many families. Banking on the Future is a grant program* established to help cover the costs associated with fertility preservation and cryogenic storage prior to cancer treatment. Through the grant, one year of reproductive material storage is covered, as well as cryobank administration, consultation fees, sperm collection, and freezing.

The grant is available to adolescent oncology patients through the age of 21. For subsequent years of storage, deeply discounted rates have been negotiated for grant recipients until age 24.

Fertility Within Reach has partnered with cryobanks, fertility clinics, and pharmacies across the country in order to provide these grants and discounted rates. A copy of the grant application is available on the Fertility Within Reach website, in English and Spanish.

*Grant availability is dependent on program funding

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR PRESERVATION & MEDICATION*

FERTILITY PRESERVATION
Banking on the Future, fertilitywithinreach.org/fertility-preservation
Livestrong Fertility, livestrong.org/what-we-do/program/fertility
Team Maggie for a Cure, teammaggieforacure.org

MEDICATION
Compassionate Care, fertilitysavings.com
Heart Beat, ferringfertility.com/patient-resources
ReUnite Oncofertility, reuniterx.com/discount-programs/#oncofertility
Village Fertility Pharmacy, vfppharmacygroup.com/pricing-and-financing/

*Refer to websites for full eligibility requirements, including age limitations.

"Fertility Within Reach helped me access resources and helped with costs. This program took a burden off my shoulders, and I am forever grateful."  
K.R. fertility preservation patient
Participating Cyrobanks, Clinic & Pharmacies

BANKING ON THE FUTURE GRANT PROGRAM

LEGEND
- Cryobanks & Clinics
- Pharmacies

nationwide
mail-in kit
Cryobanks & Clinics

The following cryobanks and fertility clinics participate in our Banking on the Future grant program. The grant covers the cost of the first year of storage, with discounted subsequent years of storage, up until age 24.

REPROTECH
Connecticut, Florida, Minnesota, Nevada, Texas
888-489-8944
33 Fifth Avenue NW, Suite 900, St. Paul, MN 55112
Locations: Trumbull, CT; Coconut Creek, FL; St. Paul, MN; Reno, NV; Garland, TX
Type of Reproductive Cell/Tissue Storage: sperm, egg, testicular tissue, ovarian tissue, embryo
Collection Methods: mail-in kit, courier
Discounted Subsequent Year Costs: $105/year for sperm, egg, ovarian/testicular tissue; $160/year for embryo

ARIZONA ANDROLOGY LABORATORY & CRYOBANK
Arizona
520-855-2689
850 North Kolb Road, Tucson, AZ 85710
Locations: Tucson, AZ
Type of Reproductive Cell/Tissue Storage: sperm
Collection Methods: drop off
Discounted Subsequent Year Costs: $200/year for sperm

FAIRFAX CRYOBANK
Virginia, Texas, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, California, Florida
800-338-8407
3015 Williams Drive, Ste. 110, Fairfax, VA 22031
Locations: Fairfax, VA; Austin, TX; Houston, TX; Philadelphia, PA; Roseville, MN; Pasadena, CA; Miami, FL
Type of Reproductive Cell/Tissue Storage: sperm
Collection Methods: in-house, mail-in kit
Discounted Subsequent Year Costs: $200/year for sperm

LEGACY
Nationwide At-Home Service
617-514-0901
Locations: Nationwide (at-home service)
Type of Reproductive Cell/Tissue Storage: sperm
Collection Methods: mail-in kit
Discounted Subsequent Year Costs: $115/year for sperm

NOTES
Infectious Disease Testing: For all participating cryobank options, patients have 30 days, from day of collection, to present infectious disease testing results to the cryobank. Without results, patients could face a fee for lack of infectious disease testing.

Additional Sperm Collection:
A maximum of $100 per additional deposit is owed to the cryobank at the time of the initial collection.

Visit fertilitywithinreach.org for more information.

Pharmacies

The following pharmacies participate in our Banking on the Future grant program by providing discounted fertility medication.

ALLIANCE RX WALGREENS PHARMACY
United States & Puerto Rico
800-424-9002
7003 Presidents Drive, Suite 260
Orlando, FL 32809
Locations: Ship to All 50 States & Puerto Rico
Discounted Costs: Programs and options discounting select fertility preservation medications

VFP PHARMACY GROUP
Arizona, California, Illinois, Massachusetts
877-334-1610
335 Bear Hill Road
Waltham, MA 02451
Locations: Ship to All 50 States
Discounted Costs: 10% medication discount

WALGREENS
California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New York, Texas
800-424-9002
Locations: Palo Alto, CA; South Miami, FL; Margate, FL; Sandy Springs, GA; Chicago, IL; Canton, MI; Edina, MN; Creve Coeur, MO; Omaha, NE; Pittsburgh, PA; Summit, NJ; New York, NY; Frisco, TX; Houston, TX
Discounted Costs: Programs and options discounting select fertility preservation medications
Acknowledgments

WISDOM FROM INDUSTRY LEADERS & PATIENTS
Content within this guide is an evidence-based collaborative effort of many incredible organizations dedicated to supporting children and their families. This tool provides credible information by utilizing the knowledge and guidance of medical doctors, social workers, health communication professionals, as well as testimony from policymakers and patients. We are grateful for the contribution of these industry leaders and patients.

JOY BADER
ReproTech
STEPHANIE BRILL
Gender Spectrum
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MARGARET MCDERMOTT
Mother of a Former Patient
DR. OMAR SHAKEEL, MD
Texas Children’s Hospital
HEATHER SONI, APRN, MSN, CPNP
Texas Children’s Hospital
KAILYN RUIZ
Former Patient
STELLE SCOTT
Former Patient
DR. NATHANAEL STANLEY, PH.D.
Moffitt Cancer Center
LEA WILCOX
ReproTech
MATTHEW ZACHARY
Founder, Stupid Cancer & OffScrip Media

“While fatherhood may be the last thing on your mind right now, it’s important to recognize that you have the right to understand your options for future family planning.”

Matthew Zachary
founder of Stupid Cancer & OffScrip Media, host of Out Of Patients podcast, and father of two

Written by Quinn Kilmartin, Former Project Manager for Fertility Within Reach.
Fertility Within Reach is a national non-profit dedicated to helping individuals increase access to fertility treatment and preservation. Cost or access to fertility preservation should not be a barrier in someone’s ability to start a family when they choose.