



Ovarian Stimulation for Egg and Embryo Banking

Online version at: <http://cancer-help.me/OvarianStimulation>

What is Ovarian Stimulation?

During a normal menstrual ovulation cycle one ovarian follicle releases one egg. More than one follicle can be intentionally influenced to develop and release eggs. This process is known as ovarian stimulation and is started by taking fertility medications and allows for multiple eggs to be retrieved and banked (stored) for future use.

Women are born with all the eggs they will ever have. Cancer and cancer treatment can put those eggs at risk, cause ovarian failure, or premature menopause resulting in infertility. Depending on the type of cancer and the treatment, the risk of infertility can be low, moderate or high.

Women who think they may want children in the future, should discuss with their care team how their cancer and its treatment will impact their fertility BEFORE the cancer treatment starts.

How Ovarian Stimulation is Started

- Injectable medications are used to stimulate the ovaries and can be self-administered at home after being taught how to do so. (Oral medications may also be utilized during this process.)
- These medications are typically given for 8-12 days but the duration can vary.
- The medications used stimulate the follicles are 2 key hormones:
 - Follicle stimulating hormone (FSH) which stimulates follicles to develop during the menstrual cycle
 - Luteinizing Hormone (LH) which allows the ovaries to produce more mature eggs
 - A large dose trigger shot of human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG) will begin the process of ovulation for egg retrieval.
- The timing of these medications being administered is very important and your doctor will provide you with a specific schedule to follow.
- Every woman responds differently, regular blood tests will be performed to measure the level of hormones in the body.

Potential Side Effects with Ovarian Stimulation Medications

- Mood swings and depression are common during this process and could be a result of both the changing hormones in your body and the stress of the process itself.
- Other common side effects reported include:
 - Swelling, rash, pain at the injection site
 - Breast tenderness
 - Abdominal pain and bloating
 - Acne
 - Headache

Fertility options that do not involve hormone medications

- Ovarian tissue banking is the surgical removal and freezing of ovarian tissue that can be thawed and re-implanted.
- Ovarian transposition and radiation shading is a fertility preservation surgery method moving the ovaries to protect them against damaging radiation therapy. This method does not protect against the effects of chemotherapy.

Resources for Additional Information:

- [NCCN, Adolescents and Young Adults with Cancer, page 22](#)
- [Cancer.Net, Preserving Your Fertility Before Cancer Treatment](#)
- [Children's Oncology Group, Guideline for Fertility Preservation for Patients with Cancer](#)
- [American Cancer Society, Preserving Fertility in Males with Cancer](#)
- [American Cancer Society, Preserving Fertility in Females with Cancer](#)
- [Alliance for Fertility Preservation](#)

Recursos en Español:

- [Cancer.Net, Preservación de la fertilidad](#)
- [NIH, Instituto Nacional Del Cáncer, Cuestiones de fecundidad en las mujeres con cáncer: niñas y adultas](#)