

Egg Freezing Guide

Planning for your Future Fertility





Introduction

If you're considering having a family one day, it's important to contemplate your current and future fertility.

You may not be sure if you want to have a family. Reasons may include not being financially ready or not being in a stable relationship. While there will be some things that are out of your control, egg freezing may give you more flexibility over your fertility journey.

Fertility is complex, so considering freezing your eggs now is one element within your control that may increase your options for the future.

Even if you decide egg freezing is not right for you, having a fertility assessment and receiving individualised advice will give you the information you need so you can make an informed decision.

What affects fertility?

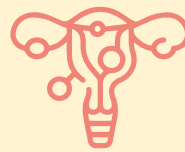
It's good to be aware of just how complex fertility can be. Many factors influence fertility in addition to egg health.

Many of these issues aren't known until someone is having trouble conceiving. It's a good idea to understand your potential fertility now, while you consider whether egg freezing is right for you. A fertility assessment with one of our specialists is a great starting point and will help identify any potential issues early.



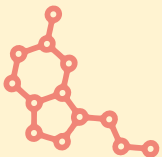
Age

Age is the primary factor that influences egg quality and fertility. This is because the number of healthy eggs you produce declines as you get older, especially after the age of 36. Sperm quality can also be influenced by age.



Fibroids

Non-cancerous growths can occur in the muscle wall of the uterus. These are very common and while most do not affect fertility, some can depending on the size and location.



Hormone Issues

Some people have irregular periods, meaning they are not ovulating regularly, while others may not have periods at all. There are many reasons why ovulation may be irregular including polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), other hormonal conditions and very occasionally, premature ovarian insufficiency (when your ovaries stop working before the age of 40).



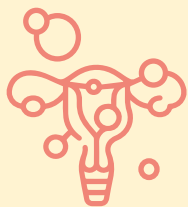
Damaged Fallopian

Blocked or damaged fallopian tubes can prevent sperm from reaching an egg, or a fertilised egg reaching the uterus.



Thyroid Problems

Issues with your thyroid can also impact female fertility.



Endometriosis

This is when cells similar to those that line the uterus are found in other parts of the body, usually in the pelvis or near the uterus. This can cause pelvic pain, menstrual problems and infertility.



Sperm Factors

Sperm-related factors can influence fertility, and in fact contribute to subfertility in at least a third of cases. Factors may include low numbers of sperm, the quality of sperm, or problems with erection or ejaculation.

Medical Treatments

Various types of medical treatments and medications can also cause fertility issues. Egg freezing is an important way to protect your fertility if it becomes at risk due to medical reasons. These include:



Cancer treatments such as surgery, chemotherapy or radiation



Hormonal therapies



Some immune therapies used to treat conditions such as Crohn's Disease

Lifestyle Factors

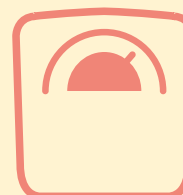
Lifestyle factors can all make a difference to fertility for both men and women. You can optimise your chances of falling pregnant in the future if you:



Avoid smoking and taking recreational drugs



Drink alcohol in moderation



Try to maintain a healthy weight



Eat a varied and nutritious diet



Get moderate and regular exercise



Find coping strategies to manage stress

What is egg freezing?

Advances in fertility medicine mean that there is help for those with fertility issues who wish to have a child now or in the future.

One of these options is egg freezing. Egg freezing preserves your eggs at the age you are now, meaning the quality and quantity of eggs stored may be higher than the eggs produced naturally down the track – once you are ready to grow your family.

There are several steps involved in egg freezing.



Initial Consultation

You will meet with a fertility consultant to discuss your individual health situation, your thoughts regarding future parenthood, and to learn more about the egg freezing process, including how it works, the risks and side effects, and success rates. You will also be given some further information to read.



Fertility Tests and Investigations

Your consultant will want to conduct a thorough evaluation of your reproductive and general health, including undertaking some tests. This will help guide advice from your fertility consultant about your current fertility potential.



Follow-up Consultation

We will discuss your test results. Your fertility consultant will be able to inform you about likely outcomes, statistics for your particular situation and what the next steps are to optimise fertility and help decide if you want to freeze your eggs.



Ovarian Stimulation

If you decide to freeze your eggs, you will take hormonal medication (typically over 10-14 days) to stimulate your ovaries, to allow multiple eggs to mature rather than the usual one. You will be monitored with ultrasounds and blood tests to see the progress of developing follicles and to determine the best time for egg collection.



Egg Collection

When your eggs are ready, a fertility consultant will collect them in a short medical procedure, done under a sedating anaesthetic. You will be comfortable for the procedure, which takes around 20 minutes.



Egg Freezing

As soon as the eggs are collected, they are taken to the laboratory and undergo cryopreservation. Eggs can be stored for years, which allows you to use them when the time is right for you.

What to expect

Benefits

Egg freezing is an effective way to store your unfertilised eggs and give yourself the best chance to protect your future fertility. This gives further opportunity to conceive in the future when natural conception may be difficult or unlikely. It also allows greater flexibility when planning the size of your family – whether you wish for one child or many.



Challenges

While egg freezing is a very safe procedure, there is a potential for risk. Most people are able to continue life as usual whilst going through an egg freeze cycle. Common medication side effects include tiredness and bloating. It's also good to be aware you will need 1-2 days off work for the egg collection.

More serious and uncommon risks include complications during the egg collection procedure such as Ovarian Hyperstimulation Syndrome or OHSS, pelvic infection, or organ damage, which is very rare.

Despite vast improvements in scientific techniques, some eggs don't survive the freezing or thawing process. Likewise, not every thawed egg will result in successful fertilisation or grow into an embryo that can be used to achieve a pregnancy.

You may need to do more than one egg freezing cycle to collect a reasonable number of eggs, to give you the best chance of future conception.

As everyone's situation is different, your fertility specialist will be able to personalise your treatment plan and any risks specific to you.

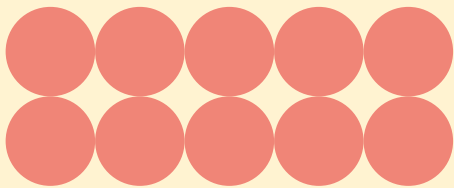
What happens when I want to use my eggs?

If you decide to use your frozen eggs, they will be thawed and then fertilised with sperm, developing into embryos which are grown in the laboratory for several days. A matured embryo can then be transferred to the uterus with the hope of achieving a pregnancy.

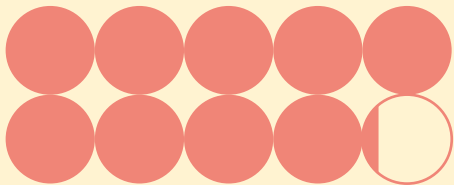
The live birth rates using frozen eggs depend mainly on the age of the woman when the eggs were collected and frozen, regardless of the age at attempted pregnancy.

While egg freezing is an effective way to preserve your future fertility, it's not a guarantee that you will fall pregnant or have a baby. This is why we always suggest speaking to a fertility specialist about your individual circumstances and find out how egg freezing could be a suitable option for your journey, so you can make an informed decision.

Below provides a rough guide to average results you might expect from egg freezing:

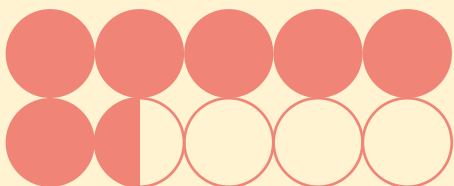


For a woman/person aged 35 or under, one stimulated cycle on average could result in the collection of approximately **10 eggs**. However, everyone is different, and the number of eggs varies from person to person.

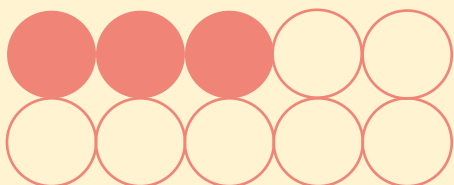


Approximately **92% of eggs** would survive the freeze and thaw process. However, everyone is different, and the number varies for each patient.

Once an egg survives the freeze and thaw process, we would expect it to behave like a fresh egg:



Approximately **65% of eggs** would fertilise. However, everyone is different, and the number varies for each patient.

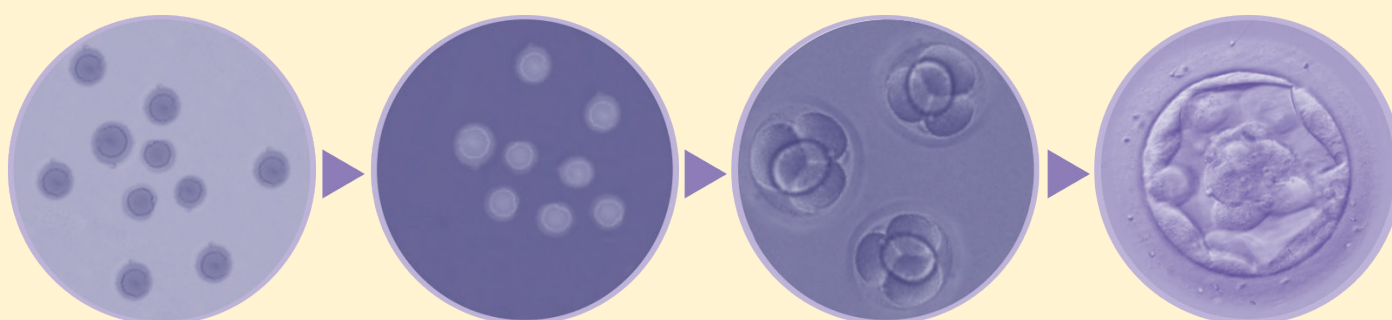


20-30% of eggs develop onto day five blastocyst embryos. However, everyone is different, and the number varies for each patient.



A single embryo would have a **35% chance** of developing into a pregnancy for women who froze their eggs at 35 years or below. However, everyone is different, and the number varies for each patient.

From Eggs to Embryos



10
eggs frozen

8 - 9
eggs survive
thaw process

4 - 5
fertilised eggs

1 - 3
embryos

An embryo from a frozen egg has about the same chance of making a baby as an embryo from a fresh IVF cycle.

A study by MelbourneIVF that involved collecting over 30,000 eggs over 10 years showed that frozen eggs are just as capable of being fertilised as fresh eggs. The study showed that thawed eggs had a 92% chance of survival and a 65% chance of successful fertilisation — rates that are very similar to using fresh eggs.¹

What if I choose not to use my eggs?

While the aim of freezing your eggs is to give you the opportunity to create a family in the future, we recognise that everyone's situation is different.

If you choose not to use your eggs in the future, there are various options available to you, including:

1. Respectfully discarding your eggs.
2. Donating your eggs to reproductive research.

Choosing what to do with your eggs can be challenging. Our dedicated team of fertility specialists, nurses and counsellors are here to help guide and support you in whatever decision you make.



What to expect at your first consultation

Egg Freezing Ireland, brought to you by Sims IVF are your partners in fertility planning. A consultation with one of our fertility consultants is the first step before deciding if egg freezing is right for you.

At your first consultation, we'll take the time to get to know you, review your medical history and discuss your goals and challenges when it comes to having a baby.

We'll also do a thorough fertility assessment which may involve blood tests and an ultrasound. This is a great opportunity to learn about your fertility as it stands today, to help you decide what to do.

Your fertility expert will discuss your results in detail and decide on the next steps together. We understand that your fertility journey is unique.

What fertility tests might I need?

Before undergoing any treatment, you may need some fertility tests. These may include:

- Blood tests and ultrasounds — to measure hormone levels and general health, and to check that ovulation occurs each month. An ultrasound may also be arranged to assess the uterus and ovaries.
- Anti Mullerian Hormone (AMH) blood test — An AMH is a simple blood test to measure levels of anti-mullerian hormone. This gives us an idea on how many eggs you may have (your ovarian reserve) and whether egg freezing is suitable for you.

Note: This test doesn't measure the quality of eggs, but it can allow you to compare your ovarian activity

Costs

There are costs involved in the egg freezing process which you will need to consider. Costs include:

- Doctor consultation fees
- Egg freezing medications
- Egg freezing procedure
- Storing your frozen eggs

Your specialist and the patient care team will be able to give you an accurate idea of what costs to expect. Contact Sims IVF today to learn more sims.ie/contact.

View the costs of egg freezing at sims.ie.

Why choose our clinic?

With more than 25 years of experience Sims IVF are pioneers in fertility treatments in Ireland. Our team of senior fertility consultants boast extensive national and international experience, ensuring the highest standard of care.

Sims IVF is one of the leading fertility clinics in Ireland. Since 1997, we have cared for thousands of patients needing treatment to realise their dream of having a baby and planning their future and have helped pioneer IVF technology in Ireland.

Our Expertise



Sims IVF became part of the Virtus Health family in 2014.

As part of Virtus Health, one of the world's leading fertility groups, we share experience and knowledge from around the world, ensuring you get access to the very best reproductive medical care

One Clinic For Every Step



A fully integrated network of care means we take care of every step of your journey for you from initial assessment, diagnosis, fertility treatment, advanced scientific techniques, and counselling support.

Low Wait Times



You can generally see a doctor in a short space of time. However, if you have an HSE oncology referral for urgent medical fertility preservation (in the case of cancer), we ensure a fertility specialist can see you within a few days.

Access to Experts



Clinics in Clonskeagh, Swords and Cork.

We also have satellite clinics in Carlow, Limerick, Dundalk and Wexford providing patients with ultrasound and blood testing facilities during their cycle.

Payment Plans



We believe in complete transparency when it comes to costs. We offer:

Packaged pricing

Flexible, installment payment plans

Coverage options through your private healthcare provider.

What Next?

No matter where you are on your fertility journey, we're here to help. We understand that planning for your future fertility can be daunting, so we deliver the best care with empathy and compassion.

If you are considering egg freezing, we invite you to make an appointment with one of our leading fertility consultants to discuss your options.

To attend our clinic, you do not need a GP referral. Simply contact your local clinic.

Clonskeagh (South Dublin): +353 1 208 0710

Cork: +353 21 441 0900

Swords (North dublin): +353 1 807 2732

or visit **sims.ie/contact** to book your appointment.

