

# Egg Freezing and Storage for Trans and Non-binary Patients

## Information for patients

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This leaflet is to give you further information on the option of freezing your eggs. If you wish to discuss this further, then you will be given an appointment at the Royal Infirmary Edinburgh. This leaflet gives you information about what to expect at this appointment and what is involved if you do wish to freeze your eggs.

### What to expect at your appointment

Your appointment will be in the Edinburgh Fertility and Reproductive Endocrinology Centre at the Royal Infirmary. You can bring someone along with you to the appointment if this makes you feel more comfortable. When you arrive at the clinic you will be asked to have your blood pressure, weight and height measured. Your appointment will usually last 40 minutes but please allow extra time in case blood tests are required or the clinic is running late. You may wish to dress in clothing that allows easy access to your arms if a blood test is required. It is also important to be well hydrated if a blood test is required.

Your fertility doctor will want to take a full history which may involve a lot of questions. We appreciate this may be overwhelming, but it is to try and give you the safest and best care we can. You will be asked about your general health, medications you take, periods, previous pregnancies, current relationships, your family history, and details about your gender treatment so far.

Please let your fertility doctor know if you want to stop the appointment at any time. Some language may be used to describe the treatment that some people may find distressing. Please let your fertility doctor know if there are certain words you would not wish to be used (for example menstruation, periods, vagina, womb).

### Tests that may be done

Your fertility doctor will discuss what treatment involves and they will offer to perform an ultrasound to look at your womb and ovaries. This is usually a vaginal scan which means that the ultrasound wand is inserted into the vagina. The scan usually takes about 5 minutes. Many people feel anxious about this, but the team will explain the procedure fully and help support you through this. You do not have to have a scan at the appointment if you do not wish this. You may have been offered vaginal dilators or oestrogen cream to use in advance of the appointment. These may help to make the scan more comfortable if there is dryness in the vagina or you have never previously had anything inside the vagina. If these have not been offered or did not seem necessary, then we can provide these at this appointment and arrange another time to try the scan.

Scanning your tummy by putting the probe on the skin below your belly button (transabdominal scanning) is possible during your treatment but will not give as accurate views of your ovaries and could potentially affect your treatment. Your fertility doctor may recommend a blood test to assess your egg reserve (Antimullerian hormone) if you are already taking testosterone, please remember to try and be well hydrated.

## Egg freezing and your hormonal treatment

Ideally egg freezing will be offered to you before you start gender affirming hormonal treatment. However, we appreciate that many people are already taking hormones prior to this appointment. Your fertility doctor will discuss your options with regards to continuing on your hormones or stopping this prior to freezing your eggs. We do not insist that you stop your hormonal treatment to freeze your eggs but in certain cases it may be recommended for the duration of your egg freezing process.

## Waiting list for treatment

Usually there is no urgency to freeze your eggs and you will be put on a waiting list for treatment. The length of the waiting list changes but is often around 12 months. You will be given the most up to date waiting time at your appointment.

## Counselling

Your fertility doctor will offer you supportive counselling to help you make a decision about whether you wish to proceed. You will not be forced or encouraged into anything that you do not wish to do. If you decide to go ahead with treatment you will be referred for **implications counselling**. This type of counselling is focussed on discussing the issues that may arise around freezing your eggs (for example, exploring your motivation for freezing your eggs, your relationship status and how you may use your eggs in the future, the laws around storage of eggs etc). We would consider implications counselling as essential before we would be happy to proceed with your treatment.

## What next?

At the appointment you may feel certain that you want to go ahead with freezing your eggs. However, you can take time to think about this further and we can arrange a follow up appointment in a few months to see the same fertility doctor. Often, there is no urgency to freeze your eggs and you may wish to consider this again at some point in the future. You can be referred again by your team at the gender clinic when you feel ready to have this treatment. You may wish to consider how you would feel if you needed to make changes to your hormonal treatment when you are fully established on this.

## Disclosure of gender history

After any appointment we would usually write a letter to you. Often this would be copied to your GP and updated on your main health records (these are accessible to anyone who may be providing you with hospital care). The details of our letter would disclose your gender history and your biological sex. Gender is a protected characteristic, and it is a criminal offence for this to be disclosed without your consent. We will ask you at the appointment if you are happy for this letter to be on your main health records or if you wish this to be kept confidential. We can communicate with your gender clinic and your GP without uploading this to your main health records if you prefer.

## Things to consider before your appointment

### Your name

You will be called from the waiting room by the name on your main health records in order to confirm your identity. If you would prefer a different name to be called, you can inform the reception staff on arrival.

If you choose to proceed with treatment, it is important that you have a photographic identity document (passport, driver's licence) that reflects your current name so we can confirm your identity. This is essential when we are performing your treatment and freezing eggs.

### Routes to future parenthood

It is useful to think about how you may become a parent in the future. This may be by using your own eggs in different ways. For example, you may wish to carry a pregnancy yourself or donate these to a partner or use a surrogate.

Depending on how you wish to use your eggs in the future you may be asked to fill in additional consent forms and further screening tests may be recommended.

### Further Information

Visit the website or scan the QR code below for more information.

**Information for trans and non-binary people seeking fertility treatment** – Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority (HFEA):



[www.hfea.gov.uk/treatments/fertility-preservation/information-for-trans-and-non-binary-people-seeking-fertility-treatment/](http://www.hfea.gov.uk/treatments/fertility-preservation/information-for-trans-and-non-binary-people-seeking-fertility-treatment/)

