

# Sperm Cryopreservation

## *Information Handout*

**Information to be reviewed by the patient (or their guardian if they are a minor), prior to sperm freezing**

### Background:

Sperm cryopreservation (freezing) is a proven technology that lets the male preserve his sperm and therefore preserve his future fertility. Sperm may survive storage indefinitely but cannot simply be thawed, placed into a woman's vagina and pregnancy occurs. It is unfrozen, further processed, and placed into the uterus through a soft catheter (called intrauterine insemination). In some cases the sperm can only be unfrozen and combined with human eggs in a dish (called in-vitro fertilization or IVF). Men may wish to have their sperm frozen because of:

1. A potentially life threatening disease (certain cancers/leukemia).
2. The need to have surgeries that may reduce or stop normal production or delivery of sperm (such as radical prostatectomy, removal of one or both testicles, vasectomy).
3. Men undergoing gender reassignment (transition from male to female sex) through hormonal and/or surgery.
4. Military deployment.
5. Use in fertility treatment when long term or frequent absences are anticipated.

### Important facts to know:

- Sperm that is frozen can often survive for many years. There is a yearly cost to store the sperm at our facility.
- Not all sperm that is frozen may be usable for intrauterine insemination and may only be usable through in-vitro fertilization.
- All patients must have infectious disease testing for HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and Syphilis in order to store sperm at our facility. If you test positive, you will be required to store your specimens at an outside location. Cost to transport and store at the outside location is your responsibility.
- **If the sperm is intended to be used in a female with whom the male has not had sexual contact, the FDA currently requires additional testing and screening for communicable diseases (paid for by the patient).** Sexual contact is defined as vagina sex (contact between the penis and vagina); oral sex (mouth or tongue on someone's vagina, penis or anus); anal sex (contact between the penis and anus). Examples:
  - A male in a same sex relationship who wishes to use his sperm to fertilize an egg from a woman (egg donor) and then have it placed into another woman (gestational carrier) with whom he has never had prior sexual contact.
  - A male undergoing transition from male to female via hormonal and/or surgeries, who produces and then freezes his sperm, and plans to use it in a woman with whom he has never had prior sexual contact.
- Males, as always, have the option of freezing their sperm without the additional testing required by the FDA. They must understand that if they wish to use their sperm in situations like the above examples, and they have not had the testing, their sperm may not be usable.