



FERTILITY PRESERVATION



Fertility preservation is the process of preserving eggs, sperm, or reproductive organs so that they can be used to have biological children in the future.

How does fertility preservation help?

Fertility preservation can help protect your reproductive tissues so that you can opt to become a parent at a later date. This can help in case of medical reasons, when treatments toxic to reproductive cells such as cancer treatment may lead to reduced fertility, or in case of personal reasons when an individual wants to delay parenthood.

When can one opt for fertility preservation?

Some conditions where fertility preservation may help include:

- Age- Advanced age can affect fertility, in case one wants to delay having children fertility preservation can help.
- Cancer therapy- This can affect fertility. Opting for fertility preservation before cancer therapy can be helpful.
- Reproductive health conditions- If a woman presents with conditions such as endometriosis or uterine fibroids which may make pregnancy difficult at a later stage, preservation of fertility can be opted.
- Other health conditions- which can affect fertility.

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How can fertility be preserved?

There are several options for females and males to preserve their fertility. Broadly these include:

- Preserving eggs, sperm, and embryos under cold conditions so that they can be used safely at a later date

- Minimizing the toxic impact of treatment such as cancer treatment on reproductive organs, to preserve them

Fertility preservation for women

- **Egg freezing:** This involves the stimulation and retrieval of eggs which are then preserved in a cold chain for later use. With sophisticated methods such as vitrification, the survival of eggs is now much more.
- **Ovarian tissue freezing:** Cancer treatment can be toxic to the ovarian tissue. Through this procedure, ovarian tissue is removed and preserved before treatment. This tissue is later implanted back by your surgeon and can help you conceive naturally or through IVF.
- **Oophoropexy (Ovarian transposition)** Strong radiation as during the treatment of cancer, can be toxic to ovarian cells. In this procedure, your surgeon moves the ovaries, up in the abdomen away from the radiation area so that they can be protected from the effects of radiation.
- **Radiation shielding:** Another method to protect the ovaries from radiation is using a shield to protect them. Some technological changes in the use of radiation can also limit the dose of radiation to the ovaries.

Fertility preservation for men

- **Sperm freezing:** In case of existing concerns or when some medical treatment may prove toxic to reproductive tissues, sperm can be preserved using freezing or vitrification.

- **Testicular tissue freezing:** In some cases, men may not have sperms in semen, in such case preservation of testicular tissue can help. Any sperm in testicular tissue can be preserved and used in the future.
- **Radiation shielding:** Similar to women, in cases when men have to undergo treatment that can be toxic to their reproductive tissues, they can be protected using radiation shields. An alternative way can be using more precise radiation technology to limit the harmful effects.

Fertility preservation is also available for children who have to undergo any such treatment which is toxic to their reproductive tissues. As in cases of children who have to undergo cancer treatment and are subjected to high radiation.

Embryo preservation

Instead of preserving the eggs and sperm alone, they can be made to fertilise and the embryo can be preserved using sophisticated methods. This can later be transplanted into the uterus.

What are the chances of success in fertility preservation treatments?

Preservation of eggs and sperms have been used for a long time and better technology has been available to increase the rate of survival of preserved tissues. However, chances for individual success depend on many factors such as age, health conditions, previous IVF failures if any, past pregnancies, etc. All couples should discuss their individual health conditions and treatment options to know the risks associated and the chances of success.

When should one talk to the doctor about fertility preservation?

- Before starting a treatment, which is toxic to reproductive tissues, such as cancer treatment.
- If one turns 35 and has no plans to get pregnant anytime soon.

All cases of fertility preservation are unique. One is advised to discuss their health condition in detail with their infertility expert to know their treatment options, chances of success, and risks associated. Ankura hospital for women and children has a team of expert obstetricians and gynaecologists who guide you through each step of infertility treatment.



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