



Semen Cryostorage: Information for Men who require Chemotherapy or Radiotherapy



Why store semen? What will happen to my fertility after treatment?

It is possible that the drugs or radiation which you are due to receive may have an adverse effect on your sperm and it may become difficult or impossible for you to father children. Sometimes this is temporary and sometimes it is permanent. The likelihood of damage to your sperm production depends on the exact nature and dose of your treatment, but it is often not possible to predict the results. Whatever the treatment, you will still produce semen (fluid) when you ejaculate but there may be no sperm in your ejaculate.

The aim of storing frozen semen before chemotherapy or radiotherapy, is to offer a potential backup in case the treatment does affect your sperm production. However, if your sperm function recovers after your treatment, you may not need to use these stored samples.

What happens if I opt to store semen?

The first step is to meet with one of the Fertility Centre doctors at the Westmead Fertility Centre, Westmead Hospital (see map over page). He will explain the process to you and obtain your consent.

You will then need laboratory appointments to store the semen. On the day of the first appointment, we will give you a private room and ask you to masturbate into the container provided. Alternatively you may collect the sample at home. The laboratory staff will carry out an assessment of the sperm in the sample you provide and then freeze the sample. Ideally you should store more than one sample. To optimise the quality of the samples, you should abstain from intercourse for at least two days prior to each sample.

How long can the sample be stored for?

We can store the sample for as long as you need. However, we do need you to contact us after 12 months, and every year after that in order to let us know that continued storage is required.

What happens if I want to use the stored sperm sample later?

Hundreds of thousands of children have been conceived worldwide using stored sperm. The incidence of spontaneous abortions or fetal abnormalities are no higher than in the general population.

To use your stored semen to try and achieve a pregnancy, it will firstly need to be thawed. Then, it can be used in one of two ways: artificial insemination, or by special in vitro fertilisation (IVF) techniques.

Artificial Insemination: Artificial insemination is much easier (and cheaper!) to perform. Your partner will be required to have blood taken in order to find out the exact day of ovulation. On that day, we will inseminate your washed semen directly into her womb. This process is unlikely to be successful if the number or motility of your sperm in the frozen-thawed semen sample is low.

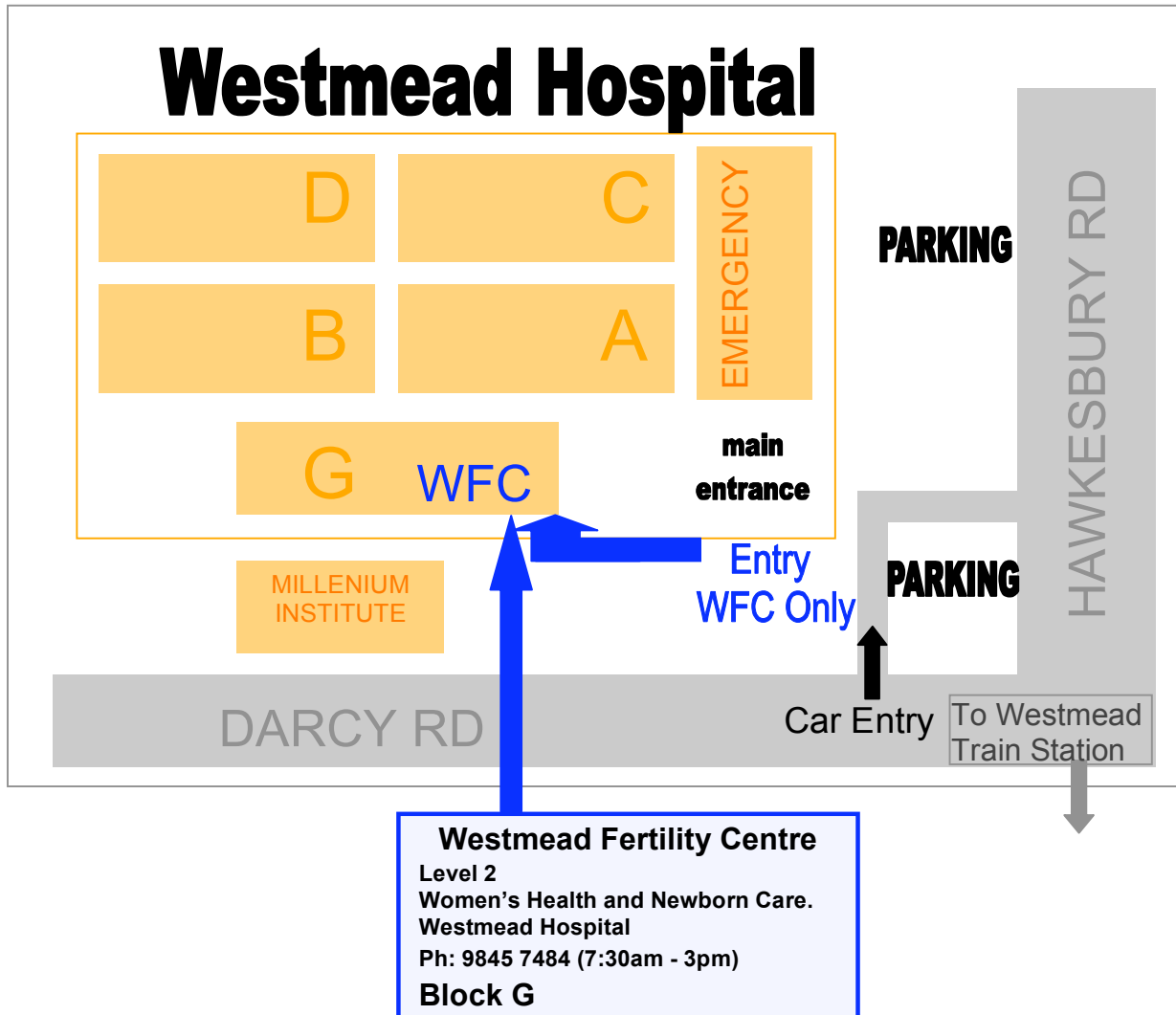
IVF Procedures: If Artificial insemination is not suitable, your partner would be required to receive drugs to make her produce a large number of eggs. These are collected by ultrasound-guided needle aspiration under a local anaesthetic, and then inseminated in the laboratory with your semen. When the number of sperm available is extremely low, it may be necessary in the laboratory to inject a single sperm into some of your partner's eggs to fertilise the eggs. Either way, approximately two days later, it should be possible to replace a fertilised egg into her womb.

Is this guaranteed to be successful?

No. We cannot guarantee success with this or any other form of fertility treatment. The aim of storing sperm is simply to offer a back up chance of pregnancy if your treatment causes a permanent loss of fertility. The likelihood of cryostorage working will depend on a number of factors, such as your sperm count at the time of freezing, and your partner's fertility. The average success rates are approximately 15% per month for artificial insemination and approximately 30-50% per month for IVF procedures.

What happens later if I want to use the frozen sperm sample?

You just contact us on **pH: 9845 7484**. We will arrange an appointment to discuss the best method of treatment and can then arrange treatment quickly after that.



What fees do I have to pay for this service?

There are no fees for the first five years of storage of your semen sample, but we do request that you contact WFC every 12 months after your samples have been stored to let us know whether you require continued storage. You should also inform us if you change your address. After the initial five years of storage, a fee of \$400 for up to five years of storage will apply.

Treatment with the semen samples (down the track) will incur a set of fees. The exact cost involved will depend on the method of treatment required.

If you want to find out whether your natural fertility has returned, we will be pleased to arrange assessment of a sperm sample for you at any time without charge to you. We will however need a further referral from your doctor for this.