

## Frequently Asked Questions About Cryopreservation (Sperm Freezing/Banking)

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### **Q. What is Cryopreservation?**

A. Sperm cryopreservation or sperm freezing is a way for men to preserve their sperm and store it in a bank so it can be used in the future.

### **Q. Do I have to make the decision to bank sperm right now?**

A. This is a common question men have during a cancer diagnosis. Most people feel a sense of urgency to begin cancer treatments. However, even a single dose of chemotherapy or testicular radiation can affect the quality of your sperm.

Sperm banking can take some time and coordination, and should be done **before** you begin cancer treatments. The decision to bank sperm is necessary soon after diagnosis, in what can be a very busy and anxious time.

If you are considering sperm banking, we encourage you to discuss this with your health care team before starting your treatment. If you have already started your cancer treatment, we are available to talk with you to determine if sperm banking is still a safe option for you.

### **Q. Who “owns” my sperm sample(s)?**

A. As the male who produced the samples you are the sole owner. Spouses, partners, or parents do not have legal rights to your samples.

### **Q. Why is legal custody of cryopreserved samples an issue?**

A. Cryopreserved semen, when combined with a female’s egg, can result in the creation of a baby. As the male who produced the sample you have the right to determine the use of your genetic material.

The American Association of Tissue Banks strictly regulates the storage and use of preserved sperm. Michigan Medicine adheres to their guidelines and accepts responsibility for the storage and custody of banked cryopreserved sperm.

**Q. After the storage of my sperm, what are my options for use?**

- A. 1. You may request release of your frozen specimen for use in an assisted reproductive technologies (ART) procedure at Michigan Medicine.
2. You may request that your banked sperm be released from the Michigan Medicine ART lab and transferred to another medical facility for use in an ART procedure.

Your sample will be sent in a special liquid nitrogen tank to the doctor responsible for the procedure. Ten (10) business days are required to prepare and ship your sample.

You will need to send a written, notarized request to our lab in advance of the procedure. Please contact the lab for additional details at (734) 763-5384.

3. You may request that your banked specimens be released from the University of Michigan Medical Center and transferred to the responsibility and custody of another sperm bank. A written, notarized request is required.
4. You may no longer want or need to continue banking your samples.
- a.) You may direct the samples to be discarded. A written, notarized request is required.
- b.) You may release ownership and donate the specimens for use in scientific research. A written, notarized request is required. Please contact the lab for additional details at (734) 763-5384.

**Q. Is there a time limit for using my sperm?**

A. At this time, we believe that sperm will survive forever.

**Q. Is there a charge for transfer of specimens to another facility for reproductive use of storage?**

A. Yes. Please contact the laboratory at (734) 763-5384 for current information.

**Q. Who can request release or transfer of banked specimens?**

A. Specimens will **only** be released with your written consent as the patient and **only** to another laboratory, sperm bank or doctor. Spouses, significant others, and parents of donors have no ownership of banked specimens. Parents of minor donors, although responsible for the storage fee, cannot request release of the specimen.

**Q. Do I have any options if I am without funds at the time of the annual storage bill?**

A. Yes, if you contact the lab, they can help arrange a payment plan for you. **Do not ignore the bill.** If payment is not made, we will assume you are no longer interested in maintaining the samples. After 2 years with no contact, your specimens will be discarded.

**Q. What happens to my samples if I die?**

A. The specimens are your legal property. The final disposition of the samples must be recorded in your Last Will and Testament. In the absence of legal documentation, your specimens will be discarded.

**Q. What happens if I move from the state of Michigan?**

A. You are responsible for notifying us about your address change. If we do not know about your new address, you may not receive your annual storage

invoice. If we do not receive payments for 2 consecutive years, your specimens will be discarded.

**Q. Under what circumstances will my specimens be discarded?**

**A.** Your specimens will be discarded:

- If you, as the patient, provide a written request.
- If the storage fee has not been paid for a period of 2 years.
- In the event of your death, if there is no Last Will and Testament that directs what should be done with your cryopreserved semen.

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