

CONSENT FORM

EMBRYO FREEZING (EMBRYO CRYOPRESERVATION)

ACCOUNT NO.
NRIC NO.
NAME
ADDRESS
SEX/BIRTH DATE/RACE
DATE AND TIME OF ADMISSION

What is embryo freezing/cryopreservation?

Embryos can be frozen in extremely cold temperatures using chemicals called cryoprotectants. Under such conditions, the embryo can remain dormant until such time as needed for an assisted reproduction procedure. Once frozen, embryos are stored in liquid nitrogen (-196°C) tanks in the laboratory. Through a thawing process, the embryos are revived and the biological processes that take place in the embryos are resumed.

Why do I need embryo freezing/cryopreservation?

Embryos that are products of an In-Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) and/or Intra-Cytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI) cycle are frozen to allow the couple to use the embryos from one IVF/ICSI cycle for future transfer to the uterus without the need to repeat another ovarian stimulation cycle.

The following are some of the instances where embryo freezing would be used:

- In fresh IVF/ICSI cycles where there is an excess of embryos. Freezing embryos allow a couple opportunities to get pregnant in future without going through another fresh IVF/ICSI cycle.
- In a patient whose ovaries are overstimulated during an IVF cycle, a subsequent immediate embryo transfer may not be safe. By freezing the embryos, this allows the embryos to be transferred into the patient's uterus at a later time when it is safe to do so.
- In couples where either spouse is about to undergo cancer treatment, embryos may be frozen for future use.

Embryo freezing will be conducted at the Hospital (the SingHealth institution where the embryo freezing is performed). Only embryos which have a good chance of surviving the freezing and thawing processes will be chosen to be frozen at the Hospital. You are signing this consent form under the assumption that embryos will be available for freezing. You will be required to pay an annual storage fee.

What are the possible risks and complications of embryo freezing/cryopreservation?

Miscarriage and ectopic pregnancy

In the event of a pregnancy following the freezing, thawing and implantation of the embryos, there is a risk of miscarriage and ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy occurring outside the normal cavity of the uterus).

Damage to embryo(s)

Embryo freezing and storage processes may result in damage to the embryos, which may not be immediately detected or determined. Potential damage to embryos include:

1. Damage to the genetic material (material found in the cell which plays a role in determining the structure and nature of cell).

2. Loss of some embryonic cells, which has been associated with reduced chance of pregnancy after transfer into the uterus.
3. Loss of embryo viability.
4. Cryo-injury (damage from the freezing and thawing process).

Some of the risks involved during the process of collecting, freezing, storing and/or thawing may be technical or procedural in nature in terms of being attributable to:

1. Mechanical support systems and equipment
2. Human factors

Such technical/procedural risks can lead to embryo damage or complete embryo loss. As a result of the damage to the embryo, there is a possibility they may no longer be utilised. While the Hospital will take reasonable precautions to safeguard the frozen embryo(s) during the period that the embryo(s) are in its custody, unforeseen situations may occur.

The Hospital will act in accordance with all Singapore applicable laws and Ministry of Health (MOH) guidelines in freezing, storing, thawing, and implantation of the embryo(s) including the use and disposal of the embryo(s).

What can I expect after the procedure?

Storage and disposal of embryos

1. Cost of Storage

There will be an annual fee for the storage of the frozen embryos. If payment of the annual storage fee is not made by the due date, the frozen embryos will be disposed.

2. Storage beyond 10 years

Embryos can be frozen indefinitely. However, after 10 years, you are advised to meet the doctor to update us on your health status and review the management of your frozen embryos.

3. Disposal

Stored embryos will be disposed of in the event that payment of the annual storage fees are not made by the payment due date. An invoice or reminder will be sent to you prior to the payment due date.

4. Management of frozen embryos

There may be instances in future where you will not use the stored embryos, due to the following:

1. You and your spouse cease to be married, whether by death or divorce
2. One or both of you become incapable of varying or revoking consent
3. You and your spouse have completed your family unit and no longer want to pursue AR treatment

For the scenarios above, you and your spouse must decide if you want to dispose the remaining stored embryos or donate them to another couple. To donate, the wife must be between 21 – and below 38 years at the time of IVF and fulfil any other conditions required by MOH.

You and your spouse will be required to sign a separate consent form at the point of donation and will be offered the option to undergo additional tests as part of the donor screening process.

Others (to be filled by Healthcare Professional) [if applicable]

Part I – Patient’s and Husband’s Declaration

1. I, _____ (NRIC/Passport No. _____)
(hereinafter referred to as “Patient”), and

I, _____ (NRIC/Passport No. _____)
(hereinafter referred to as “Husband”)
acknowledge that we have had a full discussion and confirm that we understand the nature, purpose, risks, complications and alternatives with regard to **Embryo Freezing (Embryo Cryopreservation)** (“Procedure”).
2. We acknowledge that the complication(s) listed are not intended to be exhaustive. We have had an opportunity to ask for more information about (i) the above-mentioned complications; (ii) the risks in general; and (iii) specific concern(s) of relevance to us.
3. We acknowledge that this consent does not assure that all our embryo(s) will be selected for cryopreservation.
4. We understand that the embryos can be frozen indefinitely. However, after 10 years, we are advised to meet the doctor to update on our health status and review the management of the frozen embryos.
5. Having read this consent form, we hereby authorise and instruct the Hospital to dispose of our embryo(s) in the event that we fail to make payment for the annual storage fees by the payment due date.
6. We understand that we must jointly determine the future management of any of our embryo(s) that are frozen and stored. In the event that any of the following occurs, we wish our embryo(s) to be dealt with as follows:
 - 6.1 We **cease to be married, whether by death or divorce**, we agree to:
 - Donate the embryo(s) to a couple selected by the Hospital. If there is no suitable recipient within 20 years, the embryo(s) will be disposed. [Refer to Point 7]
 - Dispose the embryo(s)
 - 6.2 **One or both of us become mentally incapacitated or unable to change or revoke our consent (based on doctor’s certification)**, we agree to:
 - Donate the embryo(s) to a couple selected by the Hospital. If there is no suitable recipient within 20 years, the embryo(s) will be disposed. [Refer to Point 7]
 - Dispose of the embryo(s)
7. We understand that if we choose to donate our embryo(s):
 - 7.1 We will need to sign a separate consent form at the point of donation
 - 7.2 The wife must be between 21 and below 38 years of age at the start of the IVF treatment cycle
 - 7.3 Donation is subject to MOH guidelines on embryo donation
 - 7.4 We will be offered the option to undergo additional tests as part of the donor screening process
 - 7.5 The unused donated embryos will be disposed within 20 years
8. We understand that if we wish to change our instructions in this consent form, we need to give fresh written instructions to the Hospital.
9. We undertake to inform the Hospital if there are any changes to our residential addresses and contact numbers after the date of this consent form. We understand that it is our responsibility to update the Hospital of any change in our contact details. If our failure to update our contact details results in the Hospital being unable to contact us, the Hospital shall be entitled to dispose of our embryo(s) and we shall not hold the Hospital liable for any resulting loss or damage incurred.
10. We release the Hospital and its personnel from claims for loss, damage or destruction of embryos stored with the Hospital as far as the law permits.
11. We thus hereby consent to the Procedure.
12. We understand and agree that the Procedure will be performed by the appropriate SingHealth institution and the Patient will be admitted and/or registered as a patient of that SingHealth institution.