

Egg Freezing



Background

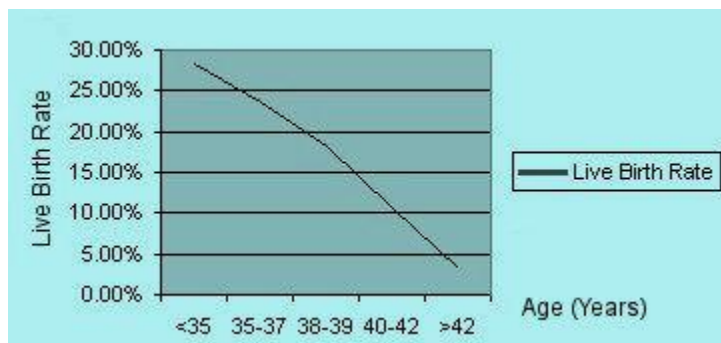
A woman's fertility is at its highest in her mid twenties but, for many women having a baby at this stage of life is not an option. Many women are postponing having their family until later in life for various reasons; these can be medical, social or economic.

Unfortunately, when a woman is older it is often harder to conceive and the chances of miscarriage are increased. This is because the number and quality of the eggs in the ovaries begins to decline in the mid thirties. This is a biological trend that we can do nothing about. However, it is now possible to freeze eggs at a younger age for use in later life. By freezing her eggs when a woman is younger we can put them into "suspended animation" so that they don't age with her.

We know that the success of IVF in an older woman using eggs donated from a younger woman is dependent mostly on the age of the donor i.e. a 'young' egg is more healthy and fertile than an older egg and the resulting embryos have not only a higher potential to implant but a lower risk of chromosomal abnormalities and miscarriages.

The effects of age on fertility is best illustrated by the national IVF figures, provided by the Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority (HFEA) showing how the success of IVF declines with increasing age. This trend also applies to natural conception

Live birth rate per IVF cycle (HFEA 2003-04 - Published 2006)



The age of the egg is more important than the age of the woman

The technology for freezing and thawing human eggs is relatively new but results so far are encouraging, with some units around the world achieving 25% pregnancy rates from frozen eggs. Pregnancy rates using frozen eggs are now almost comparable with those using frozen and even fresh embryos.

Who would want to freeze eggs?

Egg freezing is suitable for several different groups of women:

- those diagnosed with cancer who have not yet begun chemotherapy or radiotherapy, which is toxic to eggs, or who need surgery which will compromise fertility eg removal of ovaries
- those who need to delay conception while receiving non-cancer medical treatment
- those at risk of premature ovarian failure or early menopause
- single women who wish to preserve their fertility until they meet the right partner
- those who wish to delay having a family for personal reasons
- as an alternative to embryo freezing for patients who require IVF or ICSI treatment

What does the process involve?

The procedures involved in Egg Freezing are very similar to a standard IVF cycle. The process is carried out in three stages:

Step 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consultation with a consultant where the process, potential and limitations of egg freezing will be explained and any questions will be answered.• Assessment for treatment and any investigations required
Step 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ovarian stimulation and monitoring• Egg collection under sedation to remove eggs from the ovaries• Freezing by vitrification and storage of mature eggs
Step 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thawing of eggs• Fertilisation by ICSI• Embryo transfer

How long can the eggs be stored?

Currently eggs can be stored for up to 10 years although the storage period can be extended in certain circumstances.

What is the cost of egg freezing?

Egg freezing is charged at each stage of treatment – see price list attached. There is a discount for 2nd and any subsequent egg freezing cycles. Ongoing storage of eggs is charged at £20 per month and is payable by direct debit.

It is possible to pay for the treatment in stages 1 and 2 or to purchase a complete package. Egg freezing costs and options will be fully discussed when you visit the clinic

Is the Egg Freeze procedure safe?

The egg freezing procedure is licensed by the HFEA and is now well established in several clinics in the UK. Published results indicate that there is negligible damage to the egg during the procedure and post thaw survival rates of 80-100% can be expected. From the figures available to date, there does not appear to be any increase in chromosomal abnormalities or birth defects in children born from frozen eggs.

What are the success rates of Egg Freezing?

Published studies have shown that success rates after fertilization are similar to those achieved using fresh eggs and pregnancy rates of up to 40% have been reported.

Is there an age limit for Egg Freezing?

The recommended age for egg freezing at Origin is 18 – 38 years, however exceptional cases outside this age range can be considered by the clinical team on an individual basis. As success rates are significantly influenced by a woman's age each patient will be counselled regarding her individual chances of success and maybe advised against treatment

What support is available?

If you have any questions before during or after treatment the staff at the clinic will be happy to help you. You can also make an appointment to see our counsellor at any time during your treatment. Counselling is free of charge.

What do I do next?

If you feel that Egg Freezing might be for you the staff at Origin would be very pleased to see you. If you would like more information or would like an appointment to discuss your options please contact the clinic on 028 9076 1713 or email info@originfertilitycare.com
You can also visit our website www.originfertilitycare.com.

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