



Monash IVF

Preparing for Egg Freezing



Egg freezing is a way to preserve your future fertility options. Just because your body is biologically at its peak for conceiving, doesn't mean your mind or life situation is in the same place.

If you would like to have a family one day, or just want to keep your options open, egg freezing may help to give you some peace of mind about your future fertility.

This information pack covers how to prepare for egg freezing, what to expect during your treatment, how to interpret success rates and what happens after your egg collection.

If you would like more information about the egg freeze process including frequently asked questions, you can scan the QR code below.

If you require specific information about your personalised treatment plan, please contact your treating nurse or doctor.



Preparing your body for egg freezing

Whilst it's not essential to change your lifestyle in preparation for egg freezing, there are some healthy steps you can take to improve your outcomes from an egg freeze cycle.

Fertility Health Check

Prior to freezing your eggs, we recommend that you assess your fertility to determine if egg freezing is right for you through a fertility health check.

A fertility specialist will run a series of tests to check your reproductive health. They will also assess your overall health and lifestyle and identify any changes which may be required to improve your outcome.

They may identify potential fertility issues which may need to be treated before you can freeze your eggs. The earlier these issues can be identified, the better.

Sexually Transmitted Infections

Sexually transmitted infections can impact your fertility, your doctor may ask you to have a sexual health screening prior to freezing your eggs.

Chlamydia:

Chlamydia is a common sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by the bacterium, *chlamydia trachomatis*. In people with eggs, untreated infection can spread into the fallopian tubes and cause the tubes to become blocked. They can also develop scar tissue around the fallopian tubes that makes it more difficult for the tube to "pick up" the egg at the time of ovulation.

Other infections that may impact fertility include:

- Gonorrhoea
- Syphilis
- HPV
- Herpes
- Genital warts
- HIV
- Hepatitis B

Genetic Carrier Screening

RANZCOG guidelines recommend that anyone planning a pregnancy completes genetic carrier screening to identify genetic factors which may impact fertility or the health of your child. Monash IVF offers At Home Genetic Carrier Screening Kits. Speak with your fertility specialist to learn about your options.

Healthy Diet

As a rule, we suggest that patients be as healthy as they possibly can be at the time of egg freezing, as studies suggest a positive link between fertility and healthy diets. As such, we encourage you to consume a healthy diet where possible prior to starting your egg freeze cycle. A healthy diet includes:

- Fresh fruit and vegetables each day
- Good quality protein, such as lean meat, fish, eggs or pulses, like beans or lentils
- Complex carbohydrates, like whole grains
- Plenty of calcium (preferably in the form of low-fat dairy products)
- Avoid excessive additives such as colours, flavours and preservatives
- Healthy fats, like olive oil

Healthy Body Weight

We recommend that patients aim to reach a healthy body weight prior to freezing eggs. Being overweight can make the egg retrieval procedure more difficult. Being underweight can lead to irregular or long period cycles. This may impact your outcomes from an egg freeze cycle.

Every person is different, so it is important to speak with your clinician to understand what a healthy body weight looks like for you.

It's important to note that many factors can impact your weight, such as thyroid conditions, PCOS, and some medications. That's why we recommend a holistic approach to reach your healthy body weight. This includes seeing a dietitian for individualised advice, psychological support and treatment of underlying conditions.

Exercise

Depending on your fitness levels, you may benefit from increasing the amount of exercise you do prior to an egg freeze cycle. This can be a brisk walk, run, Pilates or whatever feels right for you. Australian Government Guidelines recommend 2.5 - 5 hours of moderate intensity exercise each week, or 1.25 - 2 hours of vigorous intensity exercise each week.

Through your egg freezing cycle, you can continue to exercise at an intensity that feels right for you. It's best to avoid any exercise that puts pressure on your ovaries for example abdominal exercises or weighted hip thrusts.

Smoking

Smoking can affect fertility and increase DNA damage to eggs. We recommend you stop smoking for at least three months to improve your egg quality prior to freezing your eggs. Call **13 QUIT (7848)** for help quitting smoking.

Alcohol

Whilst we appreciate that stopping drinking completely might not be feasible prior to or during your egg freeze cycle, we recommend reducing your alcohol intake to current safe drinking guidelines. The guidelines suggest no more than 10 standard drinks per week and no more than 4 standard drinks on any one day (health.gov.au). Ideally, the less alcohol consumed in the three months prior to your egg freeze, the better. If you have concerns, speak to your doctor about what is best for you.

Caffeine

It is recommended that you aim for less than 200mg of caffeine a day prior to and during your egg freeze cycle, which equals a maximum of one to two coffees or glasses of cola/energy drinks, or two to three teas. If you need to cut down, do so slowly to reduce the impact of withdrawal symptoms.

Drugs

Recreational drugs can impact hormone levels. It is recommended that you stop using any recreational drugs prior to and during egg freezing.

Egg Freezing and mental wellbeing

Freezing your eggs can be a huge relief and provide hope for a future pregnancy. However, some people may find the process unsettling. Maintaining a positive state of mind can improve your health and wellbeing. At Monash IVF we provide counsellors for individuals and couples. We know that your fertility journey can be emotionally challenging, so we are here to support you. Our counsellors have extensive therapeutic experience and have specialised skills and knowledge in the field.

Preparing for your egg collection

Your nurse will provide all the necessary details for the day of your egg collection. This is a short 15-minute surgery procedure and requires a light general anaesthetic. Following surgery you will rest in recovery, you'll be in the clinic for between 2-4 hours in total. You will require a support person to pick you up following the surgery as you're unable to drive or take public transport alone following the surgery. We recommend taking the day of the egg collection off work and you will receive a medical certificate for the day following your egg collection to allow you to recover as required.

Following your egg collection

Following your egg collection, the doctor will confirm how many eggs were collected. The embryologist will assess the maturity of the egg under the microscope in the laboratory. The eggs that are mature can be frozen. An embryologist will call you the afternoon of your egg collection to let you know how many eggs were able to be frozen.

The nursing team will contact you the day after your egg collection to do a well being check, advise when your period may arrive, discuss pain relief and next steps which may be an appointment with your specialist. Depending on the number of eggs collected, you may be comfortable with a single cycle, or you may choose to undertake a subsequent cycle to increase your chance of a successful pregnancy or pregnancies in the future.

Using your eggs

People with ovaries are born with all the eggs they will ever produce, and egg quality and number decreases with age. However, once your eggs are frozen, they don't age i.e. if you're freezing your eggs at 32 and use them at 37, your eggs are the same quality as when you were 32.

If and when you're ready to use your eggs a pregnancy can be achieved using partner sperm or using donor sperm, which Monash IVF have access to.

Success rates for egg freezing

It is important to understand your chances of a successful pregnancy in the future.

In general, approximately 85-90% of eggs will survive the initial freezing process and the eventual thawing process when you come back to use them. There is then an approximate 50-70% chance of fertilising the eggs with sperm, and approximately 40% of fertilised eggs will develop into mature embryos.

The number of frozen eggs required to give a realistic chance of at least one live birth in the future varies from patient to patient, depending on age and other factors. Your fertility specialist will discuss this in detail with you in preparation for egg freezing.

Visit: monashivf.com/why-monash-ivf/ivf-success-rates

*This information pack is intended to be read in conjunction with the Patient Companion and advice from your fertility specialist and nurse.

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