

Egg Freezing

Factsheet

Who should consider egg freezing?

Egg quality naturally declines with age making it harder for some women to fall pregnant naturally later in life. Because frozen eggs remain unchanged, this option may be appropriate for those:

- not in a position to have a baby right now but wanting to preserve oocytes at current age for future use.
- with low ovarian reserve.
- whose fertility is at risk from a serious illness such as cancer.

What is involved?

Step 1: Appointment with a fertility specialist

A Monash IVF Specialist conducts initial testing to determine whether egg freezing is the best option for you.

A personalised treatment plan is developed based on your individual needs.

Before proceeding with treatment, you'll meet with your fertility nurse, the finance team and a counsellor (if required).

Step 2: Stimulation

Ovulation stimulation begins with your period, with medications taken for approximately 8 – 14 days.

There are two types of medication used to induce ovulation: tablets (oral medication) or self-administered daily injections. Your specialist will decide which medication is best for you. This medication encourages the follicles in your ovaries (where the eggs grow) to produce more eggs.

During the stimulation period, you'll be monitored via blood tests and ultrasounds. These tests will provide an indication of the maturity of your follicles and potential number of eggs and in turn determine your readiness for egg retrieval.

Towards the end of the stimulation phase, you will be advised to administer a 'trigger injection' which readies the eggs for collection.

Your fertility nurse will tell you exactly when to give the trigger injection. The timing is critical, as the fertility specialist needs to perform the egg retrieval before you ovulate.

Step 3: Egg collection

When your eggs are ready to be collected, you'll visit the hospital for a day procedure.

The procedure itself only takes around 10-15 minutes and you will be sedated by 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 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.

It is important to understand that:

- not every follicle contains an egg.
- the quality of every egg is variable and unknown.
- eggs that are retrieved may be immature.
- it is possible that a mature egg may not fertilise in the future.
- there is no ideal number of eggs to aim for.

Every individual is different and your fertility specialist will discuss your individual goals specific to your situation.

Step 4: Egg freezing

Once your eggs have been collected, your theatre team pass them directly to the scientists in the lab. These skilled scientists recover the eggs and identify the mature eggs to be frozen. Only mature eggs are frozen - immature eggs are not viable or suitable to create embryos.

Eggs are frozen in the lab using a method called vitrification, or snap freezing.

Success rates

At Monash IVF, we would expect that:

- Approximately 85-90% of eggs will survive the freeze-thaw process.
- There is approximately a 50-70% chance of fertilising the eggs with sperm.
- 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 with age.

Your fertility specialist will discuss this in detail with you in preparation for egg freezing. For some patients, more than one cycle of egg freezing may be required to reach their ideal or desired egg number.

Costs

There are four main costs associated with egg freezing.

1. Cycle fee

Monash IVF's fee per elective egg freezing cycle is \$5,075. At Monash IVF, we are also able to offer flexible payment plans to help you manage the cost through Zip Money. Zip Money allows you to access treatment straight away with no payment required upfront. Patients apply directly to Zip Money for a 24 or 36 interest free* payment plan. To find out more about Zip Money at Monash IVF, please visit monashivf.com/zip

2. Medication

Hormone medication is required to stimulate the ovaries during an egg freezing cycle. The cost of medication depends on the person and can vary greatly depending on your personalised treatment plan.

3. Hospital and anaesthetic fee

For an egg collection procedure, there is a cost for the day hospital bed and the anaesthetic. The cost varies depending on where you have your egg collection.

4. Ongoing storage fees

Once your eggs are frozen, they need to be stored with your fertility provider until you decide to use, donate or discard them. At Monash IVF, the first 6 months of storage is free. After that there is an ongoing fee every 6 months.

Medical egg freezing patients

In Australia, Medicare provides a rebate for egg freezing if there is a medical need for the treatment. For many people that come to us for egg freezing, it is the first time they have had their fertility investigated. Often during the initial testing, our doctors discover underlying medical conditions which may impact fertility, meaning that freezing eggs is for a medical reason, not an elective one.

When this happens, you would be eligible for a Medicare rebate that will significantly reduce your overall out-of-pocket costs.

For patients preserving their eggs due to reasons such as cancer or genetic testing, the Australian Government has a storage funding program in place to assist patients with the cost of cryopreservation. Please contact your Monash IVF clinic to find out more about this program.

If you would like a complementary no obligations chat with one of our Nurse Enquiry Team, call 1800 628 533 (free call) or scan the QR code below.



*Available to Zip Money approved applicants only. Maximum amount that can be borrowed is \$15,000 – inclusive of the \$6 monthly account fee and \$99 establishment fee. The repayment amount advertised may not repay the balance within the interest free period. Minimum monthly payments required. Any balance outstanding at the expiry of the interest free period will be charged interest by Zip Money at the standard annual percentage rate, currently 19.9%