Fertility Preservation for Women
Know Your Options
Before Cancer Treatment

Cancer treatment can greatly affect your fertility. Our services through the University of Michigan Center for Reproductive Medicine can help you learn about options for fertility preservation and choose what is right for you.

What is infertility?
For women infertility means you cannot start or maintain a pregnancy. This can happen when:
- Your ovaries no longer contain a supply of healthy eggs
- Damage to your reproductive system prevents a fertilized egg from successfully implanting and growing in your uterus
- Damage to your reproductive system prevents you from being able to hold or maintain a pregnancy

How could cancer treatments affect my fertility?
Fertility risks from cancer treatments depend on many things including:
- Chemotherapy (type, duration dose)
- Radiation (location, dose)
- Surgery (location, scope of surgery)
- Other (Age, pre-treatment fertility status, cancer type)

Where can I get more information about preserving my fertility before my cancer treatment?
For more information and counseling on preserving your fertility, schedule a visit at the University of Michigan Center for Reproductive Medicine by calling (734) 763-4323. The options they discuss might include:
• Embryo cryopreservation – One of your options to preserve your fertility is to freeze embryos. In this procedure, your ovaries are stimulated to mature, multiple eggs. Doctors remove the mature eggs and fertilize them in the lab with sperm from a partner or donor to create embryos. The fertilization process is called in vitro fertilization (IVF). Embryos are then frozen for future use. The steps required to freeze embryos take between two and six weeks.

• Oocyte cryopreservation – Another option is to have your eggs frozen. This is generally reserved for women who do not have a male partner and do not want to use donor sperm. First, the ovaries are stimulated to mature multiple eggs. Doctors then remove the mature eggs and freeze them for future use. The steps required to produce and then freeze eggs can take between two and six weeks.

You or your clinic staff can inquire about the possibility of a same-day fertility preservation appointment by calling the University of Michigan Center for Reproductive Medicine at 734-763-4323 and explaining that you would like to discuss fertility preservation prior to cancer treatment.

What costs will my insurance cover?
Fertility preservation treatments such as embryo cryopreservation and oocyte cryopreservation are not often covered by health insurance. Even if you have coverage for fertility treatments, you might still be denied for these treatments because you do not meet the insurance company’s definition of “infertility.” You can petition your insurance company for coverage of your fertility preservation treatments, and the University of Michigan Center for Reproductive Medicine staff will be happy to help you navigate that process.
There are several programs that can assist you with costs for fertility treatments including the Fertile Hope (fertilehope.org) and Heart Beat Program (ferringfertility.com/savings/heartbeat/).

The University of Michigan Center for Reproductive Medicine physicians and nurses will review the following resources available to you to support your fertility preservation process:

- Accepted guidelines and recommendations for fertility preservation for individuals with cancer, tailored to your situation.
- Expected costs (now and in the future) to make your fertility preservation plans a reality.
- Fertile Hope Program – Potential financial resource for individuals with cancer planning fertility preservation, to ease the costs of egg and embryo freezing.
- The Heart Beat Program – Will provide certain medications prescribed for use by those undergoing fertility preservation treatment free of charge through a donation from EMD Serono, Inc.