

SPERM BANKING



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What is Sperm Banking?

Sperm banking is the specialized cryopreservation (freezing) and cryogenic storage of sperm for future use in reproduction.

What type of Sperm Banking is offered at the Victoria Fertility Centre (VFC)?

The VFC only banks sperm for individuals and couples who intend to use the sperm for their own reproductive purposes. The VFC does not bank sperm for donation or for third-party donation to an infertile couple.

Who would benefit from Sperm Banking?

A patient or a couple may wish to bank sperm for the following reason(s):

- To use as a back up in infertility treatment when the sperm quality is known to be variable.
- When a man whose partner is undergoing treatment at the VFC has difficulties collecting semen by masturbation.
- To use in infertility treatment when the man may be absent during treatment (travels frequently or lives elsewhere).
- When sperm are being retrieved surgically from the man (e.g. "MESA", "PESA" or "TESE" procedures).
- When the man is about to receive medical treatment which will/may affect his fertility.
- For men in "high risk" occupations where they are at greater risk of testicular injury.

How will I know if the banked sperm sample is good enough?

Comprehensive semen assessment

When the laboratory receives the sperm sample, various tests will be performed to assess its quality. The results of these tests will usually include: the volume and pH of the semen, the number of sperm, the proportion of sperm moving and the quality of their movement, as well as the % of sperm with normal shape and an evaluation of the abnormal shapes present. Most sperm samples will result in 5—15 straws being stored.

Sperm freezing and Post-thaw assessment

To help protect the sperm while they are being frozen, the sample is mixed with an equal volume of cryoprotectant solution. The diluted sample is then loaded into small plastic tubes ("straws") for freezing. Each individual straw is labeled with the man's name, the date, his chart number and a unique lab number. After the sperm sample has been cryopreserved and stored, one of the straws will be thawed and assessed. The results will include the number of sperm in the thawed sample, the number of sperm moving and the quality of the movement. The total number of motile sperm expected, in each straw, will be calculated. This information is valuable for determining how many straws will need to be thawed to provide enough motile sperm for any future fertility treatment.

What if I only have a small number of sperm or if the sample is low in volume?

The laboratory at the VFC will determine whether it is advisable to bank additional sperm samples. The VFC recommends that (whenever possible), two separate samples be banked. If two samples do not provide a sufficient number of straws, the VFC laboratory may suggest banking a third specimen. In some cases (such as for pre-treatment or surgically retrieved sperm), only one sample may be available. The laboratory will store the sperm appropriately to maximize the amount available for future use. The laboratory will also recommend how to use the sample and for which fertility treatments it is best suited.

Can Oncology patients bank sperm once chemotherapy has started?

The VFC recommends banking sperm before treatment is started. If this is not possible, banking can still take place, but the treatment may have affected the quality of the sperm. The VFC would need to know the type and duration of treatment at the time of banking.

What other tests do I require in order to bank sperm?

The VFC requires that any patient storing samples have blood tests done for infectious diseases (hepatitis B & C, HIV 1 & 2, HTLV 1 & 2, and RPR (syphilis).). All of the stored samples must be free of these diseases in order to ensure the safety and quality of our storage bank. Most fertility patients will have already been tested in the course of their infertility investigations. Some patients may not be able to

be tested prior to banking (especially in the case of oncology patients). If the results are unavailable, you will be contacted in order to receive these results or to be provided with a requisition to have this testing done.

How and when will I know the results of the Sperm Banking?

The results of the first sample will usually be available from the laboratory at VFC when you arrive to bank the second sample. Copies of the reports for Sperm Banking will be forwarded to your GP or fertility specialist (as indicated in your chart). Patients will also receive in the mail a detailed laboratory document for their personal records.

Where are the samples stored?

The samples are stored at VFC in locked and secure cryogenic storage containers. The containers are in the laboratory where they are always visible and their performance is checked regularly. VFC also uses the most modern products available to ensure specimen safety with an after hours monitor.

What does Sperm Banking cost?

Sperm Banking will cost \$125 per specimen, with a \$150 storage fee for one year or any part thereof (storage fees apply for up to three specimens in storage). Sperm Banking is not a British Columbia MSP-covered service. It is a service offered only in specialized laboratories in specialist fertility centres. Please refer to the current VFC fee schedule for the cost of Sperm Banking, banking surgically retrieved sperm, cryobank storage fees and for Sperm Functional Assessments.

How do I book for Sperm Banking?

You can book Sperm Banking appointments by contacting the Laboratory office at the Victoria Fertility Centre (250) 704-0024 ext 5.

You should speak to one of the Laboratory staff (scientists) to arrange this. The names of the our Lab team are:

Lab director: Lisa Cowan

Embryologists: Robert Heudes and Jullin Fjelstadt.

It is also important when booking sperm banking to indicate the reason for banking, and to arrange a followup discussion either by phone call or in person with either the Lab staff or Dr. Hudson to discuss the quality of the sperm that have been banked. You may be advised to bank another sample or two depending on the circumstances.

What happens after the first year of storage?

Our business manager will remind you each year to revisit your original consent form and reaffirm your wishes for continued storage including associated costs, or alternate other choices available to you. As we strive to meet your needs, we strongly recommend you contact our clinic and notify our receptionist with any change of address or telephone number.

Please note that semen samples for banking should be produced at the Victoria Fertility Centre. If this is not possible for you to do – then alternative arrangements to produce off site should be made with the Laboratory staff.

Lubricants and collection of semen in condoms must be avoided as they contain contaminants, which will kill the sperm.