

# What if I Want to Have a Child

## (For Persons Facing Cancer Treatment)

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Cancer treatment may sometimes cause infertility, which changes a person's ability to have children. This treatment side effect can happen to both men and women. This handout gives you information about the options that may be available to you if you want to have children in the future. Before you start treatment, it is important to talk with your doctor about your desire to have children in the future. Some of the options listed in this handout may not be available in your community.

### Possible Options for Men

- **Sperm Banking**

Sperm banking is the process of freezing and storing sperm for future use. This procedure involves collecting samples of semen to get the sperm. This sperm is frozen and can be stored for a long time. This option will require at least one day to complete the process. The amount of time that the sperm is stored does not appear to affect pregnancy success rates.

- **Artificial Insemination**

This option involves a man's sperm being placed into a woman's womb (uterus) through a fine tube. This is done in the office near the time of the month when a woman's egg is ready (ovulation). This procedure will require at least one menstrual cycle. Artificial insemination may be an option:

- ▶ If a man's sperm counts are lower than 20 million (lower range of normal)

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**This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.**

## Possible Options for a Woman

- **Embryo Cryopreservation through In Vitro Fertilization**

In vitro fertilization (IVF), is when a woman's eggs are gathered and mixed with sperm in a special container. This container allows the fertilized egg (embryo) to begin to develop outside of the body. The embryo can be frozen and saved for later use. This freezing is called cryopreservation. Later, the egg can be safely thawed and put into the uterus when the couple / or the woman is ready to become pregnant. This method may be able to be completed in less than 2 weeks. The rate of becoming pregnant with this method is about the same as fresh in vitro fertilization.

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- ▶ If a woman's cervix is removed or changed as a result of surgery

- **Surrogacy**

Today it is possible for a woman without a uterus to have another woman bear a child for her. This is known as **surrogate motherhood**. This can be done using an egg from the surrogate. In this case, a woman is artificially inseminated with a man's sperm.

Another type of surrogacy is **gestational surrogacy**. In this type of surrogacy, an IVF procedure is used and then the new embryo is implanted into the surrogate woman.

- **Ovarian Follicle Cryopreservation or Ovarian Cortex Cryopreservation**

This new procedure is currently being studied by researchers. It is hoped that this method will give women the ability to freeze their eggs or pieces of their ovary before starting cancer therapy. This would protect these delicate tissues from the possible effects of treatment. Then later, the ovarian follicle (which contains the eggs) or ovary tissue could be thawed and used to become pregnant.

## For More Information

If you are thinking about preserving your fertility, talk to your doctor about your options before your cancer treatment begins. You may also find it helpful to visit [LIVESTRONG Fertility](#) or [Team Maggie](#) for more information on this topic.

**For more information on fertility and cancer, we encourage you to visit our video library at <http://cancer.osu.edu/patientedvideos>.**