



Elective Egg Freezing

We can store your eggs, so they are ready when you are

There are many reasons to delay having a baby such as waiting until you are in the right relationship or a better time in your career, or you may not even be sure you want to have children but want to keep your options open. Unfortunately, the quantity and quality of eggs diminishes with age so elective egg freezing can give you more options for when to start a family.

Collecting and freezing eggs at an optimum time helps to increase your chances of a successful pregnancy in the future.

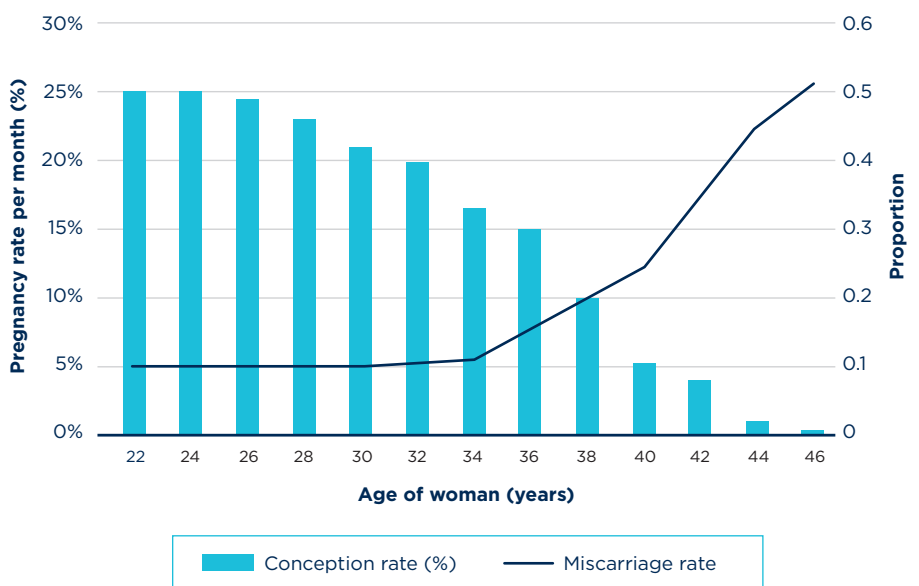
What is the best age to freeze eggs?

The optimal time to freeze eggs is between your 20's and early 30's when the ovaries contain many healthy eggs. Egg freezing after 35 years of age is still an option, however more cycles may be required to improve your chance of success. A discussion with your fertility doctor will help you to decide how many eggs to freeze in your personal circumstances so that you have the best chance of a healthy baby.

While eggs can be stored for up to 15 years, we recommend using these frozen eggs by the age of 40 if possible, as complications become more common with increasing maternal age.

Less talked about, but also common, is that the sperm of men over the age of 40 starts to decline in quantity and quality too, which can reduce your chance of making a healthy embryo with a male partner.

Estimated Monthly Pregnancy Rate and Miscarriage Risk



Genia Rozen, Kate Stern - AJGP Vol.52, No.1-2, Jan-Feb 2023

What egg freezing involves:

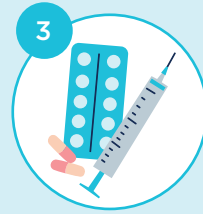
Egg freezing is a very common and safe procedure and you'll be guided through it by our fertility doctors and nurses:



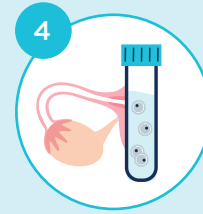
1
Initial consultation and tests



2
Appointment to review results



3
Booking on for your cycle



4
Egg collection



5
Freezing and storage

1. Initial consultation and tests

Your first consultation will be with one of our fertility doctors who will take a medical history and arrange the following tests:

- AMH blood test to determine your ovarian reserve (how many eggs you have).
- Blood tests to check overall health.
- Baseline pelvic scan and antral follicle count. This is a trans-vaginal ultrasound of the ovaries and fallopian tubes which when combined with the data from your AMH test, can give your fertility doctor a better picture of how you may respond to medications and whether egg freezing is right for you.

This consultation will be bulk-billed (free if you have a Medicare card), but the tests incur an out-of-pocket fee.

After your appointment, you'll meet with one of our fertility nurses to discuss the egg freezing process and they will answer any questions you have. They'll also check your weight, height, and blood pressure and give you information about optimising your egg quality through diet, plus anything to avoid.

2. Review appointment

At your follow-up appointment, your doctor will explain your test results and the number of treatment cycles you are likely to need based on your individual situation. If you decide to proceed, they'll provide you with consent forms and prescriptions for your medication.

You will also see a nurse who will discuss how to book on to start treatment and provide detailed instructions for medications including how to do self-injections.

3. Booking on for your cycle

You'll book on for your cycle on day 1 of your period and start approximately 10-14 days of injections to stimulate your ovaries and control ovulation. They are self-administered as subcutaneous injections into your abdomen each evening whilst at home.

You'll need to come into the clinic a few times so we can track your cycle. We'll look for follicular growth using vaginal ultrasound scans and take blood tests to monitor your hormone levels. These appointments are generally early in the morning to minimise disruption to your day.

Once you are ready for your eggs to be collected, we will advise you when to take your trigger injection. This injection helps with the final maturation of the eggs prior to collection.

4. Egg collection

The egg collection procedure takes place at Glenelg Day Surgery. A light anaesthetic is used so you will be required to fast from midnight the night before your procedure and you'll need to take the day off work (and you shouldn't drive or operate machinery for 24 hours).

The procedure usually takes about 20-30 minutes. A fertility doctor will use ultrasound to guide a needle through the vagina into each ovary and drain follicles into a collection tube. The fluid is examined under a microscope to determine if an egg has been obtained. An embryologist will then take your eggs to the laboratory where they will be assessed and prepared for freezing.

Post anaesthetic recovery only takes about 30-60 minutes and you'll be advised of how many eggs were retrieved.

5. Freezing and storage

Your eggs will be assessed for their maturity by one of our embryologists. Immature eggs are not frozen as they are not able to create embryos. The mature eggs will be frozen using a method called vitrification, which is essentially like snap-freezing as it prevents ice crystal formation which can cause damage to the eggs. Your embryologist will call you to advise how many of your eggs have been successfully frozen.

Using your frozen eggs

If you decide to use your eggs in future to try for a baby, an embryologist will thaw your eggs and fertilise them with sperm using a process called ICSI (intracytoplasmic sperm injection) to create embryos. These are then cultured for several days, after which the embryo is transferred into your uterus and hopefully develop into a successful pregnancy.

Any additional embryos that are created, if they are suitable, will be frozen for your future use.

How much does egg freezing cost?

Unfortunately, there is no Medicare Rebate for elective egg freezing and costs are dependent on each individual situation (such as whether you have private cover that may cover some fees) so it's best to speak to us for more details.

In general, the out-of-pocket costs will be between \$5,000 and \$8,000. We find that many patients unknowingly have a fertility issue that attracts a Medicare rebate, so the cost is reduced.

→ Please send all referrals via **HealthLink** to **FLINDFRT** or **enquire@flindersfertility.com.au** or fax **08 8155 5330**

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