

Demystifying Egg Freezing

FAQs



Your questions, answered **by experts**

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Your questions on Success and Effectiveness





What is the success rate of egg freezing?

The success of egg freezing depends on a few key factors, most importantly your age at the time of freezing.

Freezing your eggs before 35 gives you the best chance of success, as egg quality and quantity naturally decline with age. After 35, success rates drop, and you may need more eggs or multiple cycles to achieve the same outcome.

Not every egg will survive the freezing and thawing process, and not all will fertilise or develop into an embryo. That said, modern freezing techniques (like vitrification) mean most eggs now survive thawing and can be fertilised successfully.

The more eggs you freeze, the better your chances later on. And because younger eggs tend to be healthier, freezing earlier can make a real difference.

Egg freezing isn't a guarantee of a future pregnancy, but it can be a powerful, proactive step. If done at the right time, it gives you more freedom and time to choose when you want to try for a baby.

Does egg freezing guarantee a baby?

Egg freezing can be a powerful way to improve your chances of having a biological child later in life, but it's important to understand that it isn't a guaranteed outcome.

There are a few steps between freezing your eggs and having a baby, and not every egg makes it through each one. On average:

- Around 75–90% of frozen eggs survive the thawing process
- Of those, 65–80% may fertilise
- About 30–50% of fertilised eggs develop into healthy embryos

Even then, not all embryos will implant or lead to a successful pregnancy.

That's why your age at the time of freezing, egg quality, and overall fertility health are so important. Freezing your eggs earlier (ideally before 35) gives you the best chance of success and helps keep more doors open for the future.

Kakkar, P., Geary, J., Stockburger, T., Kaffel, A., Kopeika, J., & El-Toukhy, T. (2023). Outcomes of Social Egg Freezing: A Cohort Study and a Comprehensive Literature Review. Journal of clinical medicine, 12(13), 4182. https://doi.org/10.3390/jcm12134182



How long can eggs be frozen and still be viable?

Thanks to modern freezing methods, eggs can be safely stored for many years without a drop in quality. There's no time limit on how long an egg can stay frozen and still work, studies have shown healthy babies born from eggs frozen for 10–15 years or more.

In the UK, eggs can legally be stored for up to 55 years, offering long-term flexibility. In Ireland, eggs can usually be stored for up to 10 years, with the option to extend in some cases for medical or

personal reasons.

Importantly, it's not the time in storage that affects the egg's quality but the age and health of the egg when it was frozen. Younger eggs are typically healthier, which makes them more likely to survive thawing, fertilise successfully, and develop into embryos.

Is embryo freezing more successful than egg freezing?

Yes, embryo freezing generally has higher success rates than egg freezing. Embryos are eggs that have already been fertilised with sperm and started developing. Because they're further along, they tend to survive freezing and thawing better and are more likely to result in a pregnancy when transferred.

However, embryo freezing isn't the best option for everyone.To freeze embryos, you need sperm at the time either from a partner or a donor and that involves making decisions about parenthood earlier. There are also legal and emotional factors to consider, like what happens to the embryos if your relationship changes or ends.

Egg freezing, on the other hand, offers more flexibility. You stay in full control of how and when you use your eggs. It's a great option if you're not yet ready to make decisions about a partner or starting a family. So while embryo freezing may offer higher success rates, egg freezing can be the better fit if you want to preserve your fertility without committing to those decisions now.

A fertility specialist can help you choose the option that's best for your goals, timeline, and personal situation.



Your questions on







The ideal age to freeze your eggs is in your late 20s to early 30s, ideally before 35. At this stage, egg quality and quantity are at their peak, which improves the chances of a successful pregnancy later on.

While it's possible to freeze eggs at almost any age, success rates decline as you get older, especially after 35. After 38, the likelihood of success drops more sharply, and you may need more eggs or multiple rounds to achieve the same outcome.

Freezing earlier preserves younger, healthier eggs, but doing it very early (such as at 25) without a medical indication may not always be necessary or costeffective, as many people in this age group go on to conceive naturally.

Ultimately, the best time depends on your personal circumstances and future plans. But from a medical standpoint, sooner is usually better than later.s.

If you're unsure, taking a Hertility Hormone & Fertility Test can offer insights into your ovarian reserve and help inform your decision.

Is egg freezing possible after 40?

Yes, egg freezing is possible after 40 but it's important to know that success rates are much lower.

As we age, both the number and quality of eggs decline. After 40, it becomes harder to collect enough healthy eggs in a single cycle, and those eggs are less likely to result in a successful pregnancy later on. You may need multiple rounds to freeze a good number of eggs, and even then, the chance of having a baby using those eggs is significantly reduced.

That said, some people do choose to freeze their eggs after 40. If you're considering it, getting a clear picture of your fertility is a good first step.

With a Hertility <u>Hormone & Fertility Test</u>, you can check your ovarian reserve and hormone levels from the comfort of home. It's a simple, science-backed way to understand your options and make informed decisions — whatever your age.





Your questions on



Results



What tests should I do to know about my fertility?

With Hertility, you can get a comprehensive picture of your fertility from the comfort of home. Our <u>Advanced At-Home Hormone and Fertility Test</u> measures key hormones like AMH (egg reserve), FSH, LH, oestradiol, prolactin, testosterone and thyroid hormones — all of which play a vital role in your reproductive health.

You'll receive a personalised report reviewed by a fertility specialist, with clear insights into your ovarian reserve, cycle health, and potential red flags like PCOS, endometriosis or hormone imbalances.

If needed, we'll guide you to the next steps whether that's an ultrasound scan, further testing, or exploring options like egg freezing.

No guesswork, no waiting lists, just sciencebacked answers tailored to you.



Is it possible to estimate how long you have left to have children?

There's no exact test that can tell you how many fertile years you have left, but there are ways to get a clearer picture of your current fertility.

Hormone tests especially AMH (Anti-Müllerian Hormone) can give an estimate how many eggs you may have left, while helpful, it doesn't predict menopause timing or egg quality. Other hormones like FSH, LH, and oestradiol help assess how your cycle is functioning.

An ultrasound scan can also check how many follicles are visible in your ovaries (antral follicle count), which supports this assessment.

Together, these factors help assess your fertility, but it's important to remember that fertility decline isn't always predictable, and egg quality is just as important as quantity.

With Hertility, you can get a comprehensive picture of your fertility from the comfort of home. With our <u>Advanced At-Home Hormone and Fertility Test</u> you get specialist-reviewed insights into your ovarian reserve and overall reproductive health, helping you make informed decisions about your future, based on your biology.



Your questions on





Can I freeze my eggs if I've had an abortion?

Yes, you can absolutely freeze your eggs if you've had an abortion. Having a previous abortion whether medical or surgical does not affect your ability to freeze eggs.

Unless there were rare complications that affected your reproductive organs (like severe infection or damage to the ovaries), an abortion will not impact your chances of freezing eggs successfully.

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I have endometriosis. How does this affect egg freezing?

Endometriosis can affect your ovaries, which can lower your ovarian reserve, meaning fewer eggs may be collected during each cycle.

Some people with endometriosis may need multiple cycles to freeze enough eggs. Your clinic may also adjust your stimulation protocol based on your diagnosis, past treatments, or surgeries.

In some cases, endometriosis can affect the uterine environment, which may influence embryo implantation later, but this doesn't affect your ability to freeze eggs now.

Because endometriosis can progress over time, freezing earlier, ideally before further damage or surgery can help preserve your fertility and give you more options later on.

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I have adenomyosis. Does it make collection harder?

Adenomyosis typically doesn't interfere with egg collection, as the procedure involves retrieving eggs directly from the ovaries, not the uterus. So in most cases, egg freezing is still possible and the collection process is unaffected.

However, adenomyosis can cause changes to the uterine lining, which may make implantation and

pregnancy more challenging later on.

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I have vaginismus. How do I approach egg freezing?

If you have vaginismus, you can still freeze your eggs but the process may need to be adjusted to suit your comfort and needs.

Vaginismus involves involuntary tightness of the vaginal muscles, which can make internal exams, scans, or procedures painful or difficult. Since egg freezing involves vaginal ultrasound scans and a vaginal egg retrieval, it's important to let your clinic

know in advance so they can tailor your care.

The egg collection itself is done under sedation or light anaesthesia, so you won't feel pain during the procedure. The main challenge is often around the monitoring phase, which includes several internal scans, but with the right team, these can be managed gently and safely.

I have chronic illness/autoimmune disease. Is egg freezing safe?

Yes — egg freezing is both safe and possible for most people with chronic illnesses or autoimmune conditions. Your fertility doctor will create a personalised protocol based on your diagnosis, medications, and overall health.

Some medications may need to be paused or adjusted during the stimulation phase, but always under medical supervision.

In fact, egg freezing can be especially helpful if you're likely to need treatments in the future that could affect your fertility.

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What if I only have one ovary?

You can still freeze your eggs with one ovary.

The key factor is how well your remaining ovary is functioning. If it's healthy and responding to stimulation, it's still possible to retrieve a good number of eggs, however, you may need multiple cycles to collect enough eggs.

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specialist-reviewed insights into your ovarian reserve and overall reproductive health, helping you make informed decisions about your future, based on your biology.



Are there increased cancer risks with hormonal stimulation?

Current evidence shows that fertility medications used during egg freezing like FSH and hCG do not increase your long-term risk of cancer.

A 2021 systematic review by Barcroft et al. found no significant rise in the risk of breast, ovarian, endometrial, or cervical cancers among women who underwent assisted reproduction, including egg freezing and IVF.

While hormone levels temporarily rise during stimulation, they return to normal shortly after the cycle ends. For most people, this short-term hormonal shift is considered safe.

If you have a personal or family history of hormonesensitive cancers, your doctor may recommend a modified approach or closer monitoring. At Hertility, our specialists can help you understand your risk and tailor a plan that's right for your health and goals.

Barcroft, J. F., Galazis, N., Jones, B. P., Getreu, N., Bracewell-Milnes, T., Grewal, K. J., Sorbi,
F., Yazbek, J., Lathouras, K., Smith, J. R., Hardiman, P., Thum, M.-Y., Ben-Nagi, J., Ghaem-Maghami, S., Verbakel, J., & Saso, S. (2021). Fertility treatment and cancers—the eternal conundrum: A systematic review and meta-analysis. Human Reproduction, 36(4), 1093–1107.
<u>https://doi.org/10.1093/humrep/deaa293</u>





Your questions on

Physical & Mental Effects

of Egg Freezing



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Is the egg freezing procedure painful?

The egg freezing procedure itself isn't usually painful, but some parts of the process can cause mild to moderate discomfort and everyone's experience is a little different.

Before your eggs are collected, you'll take hormone injections for around 10–14 days to stimulate your ovaries. These can cause bloating, mood swings, or tenderness, but most people find them manageable.

The egg collection is done under light sedation or general anaesthetic, so you won't feel any pain during the procedure. It takes about 15–20 minutes and involves using a fine needle to retrieve eggs directly from the ovaries.

Afterwards, it's normal to feel some cramping, bloating, or spotting, similar to period pain. Most people are back to their usual activities within a day or two, though recovery can vary.

What are the short-term and long-term side effects?

Most side effects from egg freezing are short-term and mild, caused by the hormone injections used to stimulate your ovaries. Common symptoms include:

- Bloating (as your ovaries enlarge)
- Mood swings or emotional sensitivity
- Breast tenderness
- Mild headaches
- Fatigue
- Spotting or mild abdominal discomfort

These symptoms usually settle soon after the egg collection. You may also feel cramping or bloating for a few days after the procedure, but most people recover quickly.

A less common side effect is Ovarian Hyperstimulation Syndrome (OHSS) — when the ovaries over-respond to the hormones and become swollen or painful, however, using modern protocols, this is a very rare occurrence.

In the long term, you might notice a slight change to your next menstrual cycle like a delay or irregular period, but your cycle usually returns to normal within 1–2 months. There's no evidence that egg freezing increases your risk of cancer or long-term health problems.



Do the stimulation hormones affect mental health?

During the stimulation phase, you'll take medications that temporarily raise your hormone levels. This can lead to emotional ups and downs, including mood swings, irritability, or feeling more anxious or overwhelmed, but experiences vary widely.

Some people feel little to no change, while others describe it as similar to intense PMS or feeling more emotionally sensitive or mentally fatigued. These effects are usually short-term and tend to settle once the cycle ends and your hormone levels return

to normal.

If you have a history of anxiety, depression, or any mood disorder, it's a good idea to speak with your doctor or fertility specialist beforehand. They can help monitor your mental wellbeing and adjust your care plan to support you through the process

Will hormones used for stimulation affect future fertility?

No, the hormones used during egg freezing do not harm your future fertility. They work by stimulating the ovaries to mature multiple eggs in one cycle, but they don't use up eggs faster than your body naturally would.

Each month, your ovaries recruit a group of eggs, but usually only one fully matures and is ovulated, the rest are lost. Fertility medications simply rescue more of these eggs before they disappear, giving you the chance to freeze several at once.

There's no evidence that stimulation harms your ovarian reserve or reduces your chances of getting pregnant naturally later. Once the cycle is complete, your hormones return to normal, and your menstrual cycle resumes as usual.



Your questions on





Supplements



What lifestyle factors improve fertility?

Your lifestyle plays a big role in your fertility. While you can't control things like age or genetics, there are several evidence-based changes you can make to support your reproductive health.

Eating a balanced, nutrient-rich diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, healthy fats, and protein can help regulate hormones, support egg and sperm quality, and keep your cycle on track.

Regular exercise, especially moderate movement like walking, swimming, or yoga, can support ovulation, reduce stress, and help maintain a healthy weight — all of which are linked to better fertility.

It's also important to limit alcohol, avoid smoking and recreational drugs, and keep caffeine to 1–2 cups of coffee per day, as these can affect both egg and sperm health.

Sleep and stress matter too. Getting 7–9 hours of sleep each night and finding ways to manage stress through mindfulness, therapy, or rest can support hormone balance and menstrual health. Chronic stress has been shown to disrupt reproductive hormones and cycles.

Staying up to date with sexual health screenings and avoiding exposure to environmental toxins when possible, as these can impact reproductive hormones.



What should I do now to prepare for egg freezing in August/September?

Start with a Hormone & Fertility Test, like the <u>Hertility</u> <u>Advanced Test</u> to check your ovarian reserve and hormone levels. This gives you and your clinic a clear picture of your current fertility and helps guide your treatment plan.

If you take regular medication or have a health condition (like PCOS, endometriosis, or autoimmune issues), speak to your doctor or fertility specialist. They may adjust your protocol or offer extra support to keep you safe during stimulation.

In the meantime, support your body with balanced nutrition, regular movement, good sleep, and by cutting down on alcohol, caffeine, and smoking. These lifestyle tweaks can help optimise your hormone balance and egg quality.

Finally, plan ahead logistically and financially. Egg freezing involves several appointments and a recovery day after the procedure, so think about taking time off and budgeting for the full cost including storage.

With Hertility, you can get started today with personalised insights, expert guidance, and a care plan that fits your goals and schedule.



Should I stop alcohol or caffeine before freezing my eggs? If so, how long?

You don't need to give up alcohol or caffeine completely before freezing your eggs, but cutting back in the weeks leading up to your cycle can help support egg quality and hormone balance.

For alcohol, it's generally recommended to reduce or avoid it altogether for at least 4–6 weeks before starting hormone stimulation.

With caffeine, there's no need to cut it out entirely, but moderation matters. Aim for 200mg or less per

day, that's roughly one strong coffee or two cups of tea. High caffeine intake has been linked to hormone disruption and lower fertility outcomes, so keeping it in check is a good idea.

Making small lifestyle changes in the lead-up to egg freezing can help give your body the best chance of success

What fertility supplements do you recommend and for how long?

Many people choose to take a preconception multivitamin or fertility supplement before egg freezing, as it can help support hormone balance, egg quality, and overall reproductive health.

Key nutrients to look for include folic acid, vitamin D, B12, iron, iodine, zinc, CoQ10, and omega-3 fatty acids. These nutrients play a role in egg development, hormone regulation, and reducing inflammation.

Vitamin D is especially important for ovarian function and is commonly low — particularly in the UK. Supplementing with 10 micrograms (400 IU) daily is recommended, especially between October and March.

If you're considering egg freezing, it's best to start supplements at least 3 months before your cycle, since that's roughly how long it takes for eggs to develop.

Always speak to your doctor or a <u>Hertility Registered</u> <u>Nutritionist</u> before starting any new supplements, especially if you have a medical condition or take other medications. They can help tailor your supplement routine to your specific needs and fertility goals.

Should you take time off work to reduce stress during the process?

You don't need to take extended time off work during egg freezing, but some people find it helpful to reduce their workload or take a few days off especially around egg collection.

The stimulation phase lasts about 10–14 days and includes daily hormone injections and some clinic visits for scans and blood tests. Many people continue working during this time, but you may feel more tired, bloated, or emotionally sensitive. If possible, consider working flexibly or easing your schedule to reduce stress.

You will need to take the day off for the egg collection itself, as it's done under sedation or anaesthetic. Most people take that day and sometimes the next day to rest and recover. Mild cramping, bloating, or fatigue are common after the procedure.

Taking time off isn't required, but giving yourself space to rest physically and emotionally can make a big difference to how supported and in control you feel throughout the process.



Where can I get advice on nutrition?

If you're looking for nutrition advice to support your fertility or prepare for egg freezing, it's best to speak with a <u>Registered Nutritionist or</u> <u>Dietitian</u> who specialises in reproductive health. They can help you build a personalised plan that supports hormone balance, egg quality, and overall wellbeing.

At Hertility, we offer access to Registered Nutritionists or Dieticians who can provide tailored, evidence-based guidance based on your hormone results, medical history, and reproductive goals. Whether you're navigating PCOS, thyroid issues, irregular cycles, or want to optimise your diet ahead of freezing or trying to conceive, personalised nutrition can make a real difference.



Your questions on

Menstrual Cycle

Irregularities



Can I freeze my eggs without a regular menstrual cycle?

Yes you can still freeze your eggs even if your periods are irregular. While having a regular cycle can help with timing, it's not a requirement for starting egg freezing.

Irregular periods can happen for many reasons, including stress, PCOS, thyroid issues, low body weight, or coming off hormonal contraception. These don't necessarily mean you can't freeze your eggs, but they do mean it's worth looking into what's going on hormonally.

The first step is usually a hormone test and pelvic ultrasound to assess your ovarian reserve and overall reproductive health. This gives your fertility specialist the information they need to tailor your treatment.

With the right medication protocol, your ovaries can still be stimulated to produce multiple eggs, even if you don't ovulate regularly on your own.



Your questions on







How are eggs retrieved or extracted?

Egg retrieval is a short and straightforward procedure performed under sedation or light anaesthetic, so you won't feel any pain while it's happening.

After around 10–14 days of hormone injections to stimulate your ovaries, your fertility team will schedule the egg collection about 36 hours after your trigger injection, which helps finalise egg maturation. The procedure takes about 15–20 minutes.

Using ultrasound guidance, a thin needle is gently passed through the vaginal wall and into each ovary. The fluid inside your ovarian follicles (where your eggs grow) is drawn out and passed to the lab. Embryologists then identify and collect the mature eggs from this fluid.

Once collected, the eggs are rapidly frozen using a technique called vitrification. This protects them from damage and preserves their quality for use in the future.

After the procedure, you'll rest at the clinic before going home the same day. It's common to feel cramping, bloating, or light spotting for a few days, similar to period pain. Most people feel well enough to return to normal activities within a day or two.





What kind of sedation is used?

Most clinics use conscious sedation for egg collection. This is a medically controlled state where you're awake but deeply relaxed, with little to no awareness or memory of the procedure.

Unlike general anaesthesia, you typically remain responsive to verbal cues or light touch, but you won't feel pain or discomfort. Recovery is also faster, with fewer side effects.

The entire egg retrieval usually takes about 15–20

minutes, and you'll rest in a recovery area afterwards for around an hour before going home.

The exact sedation approach can vary between clinics, so it's best to ask your care team what to expect and discuss any concerns in advance.



Do you need to keep repeating the process (more cycles)?

It depends on your personal goals, age, and how many mature eggs are collected in your first cycle.

For some people, one cycle may be enough to freeze a good number of eggs. Others especially those over 35 or with a lower ovarian reserve may benefit from doing more than one cycle to increase

their chances of a successful pregnancy in the future.

Your fertility specialist will review your egg count, age, and overall reproductive health to help you decide if a second or third cycle is recommended.



How many eggs should I freeze?

The number of eggs you may want to freeze depends on a few personal factors like your age, egg quality, fertility goals, and how many children you hope to have in the future. Generally, the younger you are when you freeze your eggs, the fewer you may need to preserve your chances of a successful pregnancy later on.

As a helpful benchmark, research suggests that freezing 10–15 mature eggs before the age of 35 could give you around a 70% chance of having at least one live birth in the future.

If you're freezing in your late 30s or early 40s, you may need more eggs - sometimes 20 or more - as egg quality and fertilisation potential naturally decline with age. But it's still possible to build a strong reserve with the right plan.

Not every egg will survive thawing, fertilise, or develop into an embryo, which is why banking more eggs improves your chances. Some people choose to do more than one cycle to increase the number of eggs frozen – especially if they're freezing after 35.

Ultimately, egg freezing gives you the chance to plan for the family you want, on a timeline that works for you.

Varlas, V.N.; Bors, R.G.; Albu, D.; Penes, O.N.; Nasui, B.A.; Mehedintu, C.; Pop, A.L. Social Freezing: Pressing Pause on Fertility. Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health 2021, 18, 8088.

How many eggs do you get per cycle?

Most people retrieve 10–15 eggs in one egg freezing cycle, but the number can range anywhere from 0 to 25 or more, depending on your individual biology. The exact number depends on a few key factors:

- Your age: Younger people tend to produce more eggs, and those eggs are often higher quality.
- Ovarian reserve: This refers to how many eggs you have left, which can be estimated through tests like AMH levels and antral follicle count.
- Underlying conditions: Conditions like PCOS may lead to a higher number of egg retrieved, but their quality might be affected while endometriosis or low ovarian reserve may result in fewer.
- Response to stimulation medication: Everyone's body responds differently to hormone injections, and your dose may be adjusted during the cycle to maximise egg growth safely.

Your fertility specialist will monitor your response closely during the cycle to optimise results and help you decide whether more than one round may be needed based on your goals.

What if you're afraid of needles for injections?

Being afraid of needles is completely normal, and it doesn't mean you can't go through the egg freezing process.

You don't have to do it alone. A partner, friend, or nurse can give the injections for you if you're not comfortable doing them yourself. Some clinics also offer nurseadministered injections or extra support.

Practice beforehand. Your clinic can give you a demo pen and talk you through the process in a calm setting. Practising before your cycle starts can help reduce anxiety and make the injections feel more familiar.

Applying a numbing cream or placing an ice pack on the injection site for a minute beforehand can dull the sensation and make the experience less stressful.

Distract yourself. Deep breathing, music, videos, or focusing on a timer can help you stay calm and focused. Making it part of a routine such as doing it at the same time each day can also help build confidence.

The injections use very fine, short needles and are usually given just under the skin of your stomach. While the idea may feel daunting at first, most people find that it gets easier after the first few days and that the worry is often worse than the reality.



Should I freeze my eggs or go for IVF/IUI?

It depends on your goals and where you are in your fertility journey. Your age, ovarian reserve, relationship status, and medical history all influence which option may be best for you.

If you're not ready to have a child now, egg freezing allows you to preserve your fertility by storing eggs while they're still healthy. This gives you more options later, especially if you're unsure about when or with whom you want to have children.

If you're ready to try now, IVF or IUI may be more appropriate. IVF involves fertilising eggs in a lab and transferring an embryo into the uterus. IUI is a simpler, less invasive treatment that places sperm directly into the uterus but is best for those with no major fertility issues.

It's also worth noting that embryos tend to survive the freezing and thawing process better than eggs, and embryo freezing typically has higher success rates. But freezing embryos requires using sperm, which may not suit everyone's situation or timeline.

A specialist can then help you choose the right path based on your needs, timing, and whether you're planning for now or the future.

Can eggs be fertilised and frozen as embryos on the same day?

Eggs are fertilised shortly after they're retrieved, but embryos aren't frozen on the same day. Once the eggs are collected and fertilised with sperm, embryologists monitor them closely in the lab over the next few days to see how they develop.

Typically, embryos are frozen on day 5 or 6, when they reach the blastocyst stage - a key point in development where they're more likely to implant successfully during a future transfer. Freezing at this stage helps embryologists select the strongest, healthiest embryos.

So while fertilisation happens within hours of egg collection, the actual freezing happens a few days later once the embryos have had time to grow and be assessed.

Demystifying Egg Freezing

We're all at different stages of our journey. Go to <u>HertilityHealth.com</u> to find out where yours begins.

