

# Oncofertility

Cancer Treatment and Fertility



**SANFORD<sup>®</sup>**  
CANCER CENTER



# Introduction

## About Us

The Oncofertility team at Sanford will support you as you explore options for future family planning before and after cancer treatment.

We can help to:

- Make sure that you are given information about your fertility risk based on your treatment plan.
- Inform you of possible options and how to access them.
- Support you as you make choices.
- Help manage the care between your oncology team(s) and reproductive medicine team(s). This will help all those caring for you to have the same understanding and plan for your care.
- Answer your questions and concerns related to family planning before, during, and after cancer treatment.
- Connect you with services and resources needed.

These are some of the questions that we may be able to help answer:

- What may affect my ability to have children in the future now that I have cancer?
- What options are available if I am interested in trying to preserve my fertility?
- What financial resources are available and how do I connect with them?
- What services are available to help me cope with any stress, worries, or concerns that I may have?
- How do I find out more about my fertility status and options after I am done with cancer treatment?
- How will treatment affect my sexual health?

## Contact Information

To connect with these services or for more information about the program, please contact us.

### Bemidji

Adult contact: Phone: (218) 333-5522  
(Ask for a Fertility Navigator)

### Bismarck

Adult contact: Phone: (701) 323-5749  
Email: Survivorship.BIS@sanfordhealth.org  
Pediatrics contact: Phone: (701) 323-6530

### Fargo

Adult contact: Phone: (701) 234-6753  
Email: Fargosurvivorship@sanfordhealth.org  
Pediatrics contact: Phone: (701) 234-7544

### Sioux Falls

Adult contact: Phone: (605) 328-8000  
(Ask for a Fertility Navigator)  
Pediatrics contact: Phone: (605) 312-1000



# Decision Making

We know that family planning is a personal decision. Our goal is to make sure that you have the information needed to make the best decisions for you today and your future. We are here to help as you decide how to proceed. Many factors can play a role in deciding your options for preserving your fertility before you start cancer treatment. Some things to consider may include:

- **Life goals, values, and priorities.** Think about what is most important to you.
- **Type of treatment you will need.** Patients are at a higher risk of infertility after these treatments:
  - Some types of chemotherapy. Usually, the higher the dose, the higher the risk.
    - Alkylating agents (For example Cyclophosphamide)
    - Heavy Metal agents (For example Cisplatin or Carboplatin)
    - Others
  - Bone marrow transplant
  - Radiation to whole body, pelvis, or brain. Risk depends on the location and dose of the radiation.
  - Surgery to reproductive organs or pelvic area
- **How quickly you need to start treatment**
- **Risk of cancer returning**
- **Age**
- **Baseline reproductive ability**
  - **Females:** An Anti-Mullerian Hormone (AMH) level is a blood test that helps show how many egg follicles a woman has left that may develop into mature eggs. (It does not give any information about the quality or genetic health of those eggs if they develop). Having this blood test before treatment can help give an idea of someone's baseline fertility. The AMH level also helps show how someone may respond to In-Vitro Fertilization (IVF). AMH levels do not give useful information before puberty.
  - **Males:** A baseline sperm analysis can be done.
- **Possible genetic risk to future children**
- **Cost**



# Options for Preserving Fertility

If your cancer treatment affects your ability to have children in the future, Sanford's Fertility Preservation Program is here to help.

## Egg Freezing

- May be done for females after puberty.
- Hormone medication is given for 2 to 4 weeks to stimulate egg development.
- During an outpatient procedure, mature eggs are removed from the ovary. Anesthesia is given to make the procedure more comfortable.
- The eggs are frozen and stored.
- When treatment is done and you are ready to move forward, the eggs can be thawed and fertilized with sperm from your partner or a donor to develop embryos.
- Developing embryos are then implanted in the uterus.

## Embryo Freezing

- May be done for females after puberty.
- Hormone medication is given for 2 to 4 weeks to stimulate egg development.
- During an outpatient procedure, mature eggs are removed from the ovary. Anesthesia is given to make the procedure more comfortable.
- Right after the eggs are removed, they are fertilized with sperm to develop embryos.
- The embryos are frozen and stored.
- When cancer treatment is done, the embryos can be thawed and implanted in the uterus.

## Sperm Freezing

- May be done for males after puberty.
- A sperm sample is collected, frozen, and stored for use in the future.
- For best results, men should abstain from ejaculation, including sex or masturbation 48 hours before collection.
- The sperm can be thawed for use and:
  - Placed in the uterus to allow an egg to be fertilized during a woman's naturally occurring cycle
  - Used in the lab to fertilize an egg and form an embryo which is then placed in a woman's uterus

## Ovarian Transposition

- May be done for females of any age before having radiation therapy to the pelvic area.
- A minimally invasive surgery is done to:
  - Move the ovaries out of the radiation treatment area
  - Place markers around the ovaries so they can be seen on x-ray
- After treatment, the ovaries may need to be repositioned for you to become pregnant.

## Donor Eggs or Sperm

- **Egg donation:** An egg can be donated to a patient who is unable to produce eggs on their own. The egg is then fertilized using In Vitro Fertilization and carried by the patient or a gestational carrier (see below).
- **Sperm donation:** Sperm can be donated to a patient who is unable to produce their own. This sperm can be injected into a woman's uterus (IUI) or used for In Vitro Fertilization (IVF).
- Not all states support egg and sperm donation. Talk with your oncofertility team about the laws in your state.
- A referral to reproductive medicine can be made to discuss options and help with this process.

## Gestational Carriers

- A Gestational Carrier is someone who carries and delivers a baby for another couple using that couple's embryo. This is different from a surrogate who uses her own egg and sperm from the father or a donor.
- Not all states support gestational carriers. Talk with the oncofertility team about the laws in your state



# Financial Help

## Livestrong Fertility

Complete application online at [livestrong.org/fertility](https://livestrong.org/fertility). A Fertility Navigator can help with this application.

### Eligibility Requirements

- US citizen or permanent resident
- Cancer diagnosis
- Either uninsured or insured with no or limited fertility benefits
- Adjusted gross income of less than or equal to \$130,000 single woman or \$170,000 if married

### Benefits if Approved

- Adjusted gross household income is less than or equal to \$101,000 single man or \$130,000 if married
- Offer one cycle of free medications
- Free samples of medications when available
- Discounted payment rate for out-of-pocket maximum of \$757.50 for sperm freezing. Additional sperm collection is \$220

## Team Maggie for a Cure

Complete application online at [teammaggieforacure.com](https://teammaggieforacure.com).

### Eligibility Requirements

- Male or Female
- US citizen or permanent resident
- Ages 15 to 37 years old
- Cancer diagnosis
- Denied coverage by insurance
- Accepts applicants on Medicaid
- Provide documentation of financial need

### Benefits if Approved

- Grant may provide up to \$2,500 to reimburse fertility preservation costs for males or females.
- Grant amounts are dependent on the funds that are available at the time and are determined by the Board of Directors.
- The money granted is given directly to the medical provider.

# ReUnite Oncofertility Program

Complete application online at [reuniterx.com](http://reuniterx.com).

## Eligibility Requirements

- Female
- Cancer diagnosis
- Cancer diagnosis with treatments that are a risk of infertility
- Either uninsured or insured with no fertility drug benefits
- No chemotherapy in the past
- Proof of current income – 1040 tax document

## Benefits if Approved

One year discount for medications:

- Follistim
- Ganirelix
- Pregnyl

# The Samfund

Complete application online at [thesamfund.org/get-help/grants](http://thesamfund.org/get-help/grants).

## Eligibility Requirements

- US resident
- Cancer survivor
- Male or Female
- Ages 21 to 39 years old when application is submitted
- **And 1** of the following:
  - Treatment is done with no evidence of disease **or**
  - 1 year after treatment with stable disease or in remission on long-term therapy such as hormone therapy, targeted therapy, or immunotherapy

## Benefits if Approved

- Offer one cycle of free medications
- Free samples of medications when available
- Maximum amount to request for family building is \$4,000. The average amount granted is \$2,500
- You can only receive 1 grant each year, with a maximum of 2 grants total.



## Verna's Purse

Complete application online at [reprotech.com/verna-s-purse](http://reprotech.com/verna-s-purse).

### Eligibility Requirements

- Male or female
- US citizen or permanent resident
- Cancer diagnosis with treatments that are a risk of infertility
- Adjusted gross income of less than \$75,000 single or \$100,000 couple

### Benefits if Approved

- Initial shipping cost is discounted to \$150
- Annual storage fee for frozen eggs, ovarian tissue, semen, or testicular tissue is discounted to \$111
- Annual storage fee for frozen embryos is discounted to \$132 each year

## Walgreens Heartbeat Program

Complete application with the Reproductive Medicine staff.

### Eligibility Requirements

- Female
- 43 years old or younger
- US citizen or permanent resident
- Cancer diagnosis within the last 12 months
- No previous gonadotoxic treatment before starting fertility preservation
- Receiving no government assistance

### Benefits if Approved

Free medications:

- Menopur
- Novarel
- Ganirelix

## WiTT (We're in This Together)

[wittforever.com](http://wittforever.com)

This program is a social platform that gives patients the opportunity to ask for help. This includes help with everyday tasks that need completing and financial help.

If you chose to have your profile viewable publicly, gives your support team as well as non-profit agencies the opportunity to donate to you directly to help meet your needs.

# Resources

## Education

- Alliance for Fertility Preservation
- [Allianceforfertilitypreservation.org](http://Allianceforfertilitypreservation.org)
- Information about:
  - Fertility risks from treatment
  - Options for men and women
    - Fertility preservation options
    - Post-treatment options
- Financial assistance
- Mentorships, advocacy, and support groups

### American Cancer Society

[cancer.org/treatment/treatments-and-side-effects/physical-side-effects/fertility-and-sexual-side-effects](http://cancer.org/treatment/treatments-and-side-effects/physical-side-effects/fertility-and-sexual-side-effects)

Information about:

- Cancer and sexuality
- Cancer and fertility
- For Parents: Preserving fertility in children and teens

### American Society of Clinical Oncology Patient information

[cancer.net/search/site/Fertility](http://cancer.net/search/site/Fertility)

Information about:

- Navigating fertility concerns and cancer before and after treatment

### Livestrong

[livestrong.org/fertility](http://livestrong.org/fertility)

Information about:

- Reproductive information
- Resources
- Financial support

### The Oncofertility Consortium

[oncofertility.msu.edu](http://oncofertility.msu.edu)

The project is:

- International
- Including many types of health workers
- Designed to look at the reproductive future of cancer survivors and those with other conditions that affect fertility

## Online Support and Mentorship

# Tigerlily Foundation

**tigerlilyfoundation.org**

To educate, advocate for, empower, and support young women, before, during and after breast cancer.

## Imerman Angels

**imermanangels.org**

Uses a unique matching process to partner anyone – any age, any gender, anywhere, and any cancer type – seeking support with someone just like them, called a Mentor Angel. This person is a cancer survivor or caregiver who has faced the same type of cancer.

# Notes

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