

# FERTILITY PRESERVATION INFORMATION

For female survivors of childhood, adolescent & young adult cancer

## What is fertility preservation?

Some cancer treatments (chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy) can have a long term effect on your fertility; your ability to have children in the future.

Fertility preservation refers to treatments which aim to protect your fertility. This usually means saving and freezing your eggs (also known as oocytes), so that you can use them to try to have children later in life.

Eggs can be frozen and stored prior to commencing cancer treatment. However this has not been the practice in Ireland until very recently. However, egg freezing can also be done following treatment if it looks like the number of eggs in your ovaries has been reduced by that treatment. We know that the quality and number of eggs decline in all women as they get older, so if you are already affected, it may be worth considering freezing eggs at this stage.

## Fertility assessment

If you would like to explore whether your fertility has been affected by your treatment, it is possible to have an appointment at Merrion Fertility Clinic. This will involve an AMH level (blood test), an ultrasound scan, and a 30-minute consultation with a doctor. Based on this assessment we may discuss the prospect of freezing your eggs (oocyte vitrification). However, if your tests are all normal, this will not be required.

## What is AMH?

AMH (Anti Mullerian Hormone) is a hormone released by small follicles in your ovary. These follicles contain your eggs, so the greater the number of eggs, the higher the AMH level. Therefore, the AMH level gives us an indication of the number of eggs left in your ovaries.

## What is involved in the Ultrasound scan?

The purpose of the ultrasound scan is to assess your reproductive organs – womb, fallopian tubes, and ovaries. We particularly focus on the number of small follicles on your ovaries (the antral follicle count). This number is reflective of your egg reserve and together with your AMH, will guide our recommendations.

The best way to view your follicles is by doing a transvaginal ultrasound scan. This is done by inserting a small probe into the vagina. This is the size of a tampon and is usually quite comfortable. If you have never been sexually active or, if a vaginal scan is unacceptable to you, we can do a transabdominal ultrasound scan (tummy scan) instead.

## Doctors Consultation

This is a 30-minute consultation and can take place virtually. The doctor will take your medical history and will interpret and explain the findings of your investigations. They may make a recommendation to freeze your eggs if you have low ovarian reserve and can explain the process to you and answer any of your questions.

