

Comparing fertility preservation methods

I am thinking about storing...	Can I do this before puberty?	Can I do this after puberty?	How long does it take to collect?	How is this used to start a pregnancy?	Other things to think about
Sperm	No	Yes	A few days.	The sperm are thawed (unfrozen) and may be used to fertilise an egg with IUI, IVF or ICSI.	Collecting and storing sperm is a safe and simple process. It has been used for many years. If you have difficulty providing sperm by masturbation, there may be other ways to collect samples.
Tissue from a testicle (testicular cryopreservation)	Yes	Yes	A few days.	Not yet known.	Collecting testicular tissue involves a small operation under a general anaesthetic. It is only available at a few clinics in the UK. In the future, there may be ways to use the stored tissue to produce sperm. But research is still at an early stage. Testicular tissue has not yet been used to start a pregnancy. Doctors do not fully know the risks involved.
Eggs	No	Yes	At least 2 weeks.	The eggs are thawed (unfrozen) and may be fertilised using IVF or ICSI to create embryos. An embryo is then transferred to the womb.	You usually need to have ovarian stimulation before eggs are collected. This process is not always possible or suitable for everyone. You are the person who has a right in deciding how the eggs are used in the future. You do not need sperm from a partner or donor until you are ready to try and fertilise the eggs.
Embryos	No	Yes	At least 2 weeks.	An embryo is thawed (unfrozen) and transferred to the womb.	No You usually need to have ovarian stimulation before eggs are collected to make embryos. This process is not always possible or suitable for everyone. If a partner provided sperm or consent to create the embryos with you, they also have rights in deciding how the embryos are used in the future.
Tissue from an ovary (ovarian cryopreservation)	Yes	Yes	A few days	You have a small operation to put the tissue back into the body. You may then be able to start a pregnancy by having vaginal sex, or with fertility treatments such as IUI or IVF.	This option may not be suitable if there is any risk of there being cancer cells in the ovary. Collecting ovarian tissue involves a small operation under a general anaesthetic. It is only available at a few clinics in the UK. You do not need to have ovarian stimulation. You do not need sperm from a partner or donor to be able to store ovarian tissue. Only a few babies in the world have been born using this method.