

## Eggs, Sperm and Embryos - storage

The law specifies for how long gametes and embryos can be stored. The rules apply whether you are storing your own embryos or gametes for your future use or you are storing donor gametes or embryos. There are various rules which apply and which depend upon the particular circumstances of the case.

### Embryos stored prior to 1 October 2009 whose storage period ends after 1 October 2009

Until 1 October 2009, embryos could only be stored for a basic period of five years. However, the new basic ten year period applies automatically to all embryos in storage on 1 October 2009, even if their five year storage period expired before 1 October 2009. When the statutory storage period comes to an end, the embryos must be allowed to perish, unless they qualify for extended storage.

### Eggs or sperm stored prior to 1 October 2009 whose storage period ends after 1 October 2009

As from 1 October 2009, gametes can be stored for a basic storage period of ten years (gamete providers can set a shorter period if they wish). When the statutory storage period comes to an end, the gametes must be allowed to perish, unless they qualify for extended storage.

### Eggs, sperm or embryos which are placed in storage on or after 1 October 2009

All eggs, sperm or embryos placed in storage on or after 1 October 2009 can be stored for 10 years (provided that consent is in place). When the statutory storage period comes to an end, the gametes must be allowed to perish, unless they qualify for extended storage.

### Extended storage

Where you are storing gametes or embryos because you, or the person you are donating to, is prematurely infertile the law will allow gametes or embryos to be stored for longer than the basic statutory period.

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology (Statutory Storage Period for Embryos and Gametes) Regulations 2009 make it possible to extend the storage period up to a maximum of 55 years providing that every 10 years the centre obtains a written opinion from a registered medical practitioner that the relevant person is or is likely to become prematurely infertile. This written opinion can be obtained at any point during the initial 10-year storage period and the embryos, sperm or eggs can then be stored for a further 10 years from the date opinion was obtained. The storage period can be extended for further 10-year periods if further written opinions are provided. Gamete providers will need to provide written consent to the storage of their eggs or sperm for the extended period.

Gamete providers will need to provide written consent to the storage of embryos, sperm or eggs for the extended period.

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