



# Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) Storage Funding Program

2 October 2023

## Information for patients

This fact sheet provides you with an overview of the ART Storage Funding Program. The program aims to reduce the costs for preserving eggs, sperm, or embryos through cryostorage (freezing). This program is for two groups of people who face extra costs for preserving their fertility following a cancer diagnosis or following the results of their genetic testing.

## Eligibility requirements

You are eligible for subsidised cryostorage under the program if you:

- a) hold a valid Medicare card, and
- b) seek cryostorage of eggs, sperm or embryos for fertility due to:
  - a cancer diagnosis as shown by medical documentation, or
  - being at risk of passing on genetic conditions, and have undergone pre-implantation genetic testing (PGT) funded by the Medicare Benefit Schedule (MBS), as described in MBS items [13207](#), [73384](#), [73385](#), [73386](#) or [73387](#) (further information [here](#)).

You must use an ART clinic that has a current licence from the Reproductive Technology Accreditation Committee (RTAC) to store your materials.

Eligible patients can access cryostorage funding for up to 2 items, for up to ten years. For example, they can store eggs *or* sperm, *and* embryos for a maximum of ten years each. The ten years do not need to be continuous.

## Program start date

The program commenced on 1 July 2023 and is ongoing.

## Payments

No payments are made directly to patients. Payments will be made to ART clinics on your behalf, using a payment system managed by Services Australia.

ART clinics cannot charge extra out-of-pocket costs for cryostorage to patients who are funded under this program.

If you are eligible, your ART clinic will invite you to opt-in to this program. Every 6 months they will provide you with a written payment statement as evidence of funding provided. If your ART clinic does not invite you and you believe you are eligible, please contact them.

## Patient obligations

You need to let your ART clinic know if:

- your details change (for example your name, address, Medicare card number)
- if you don't need your materials anymore.

## Further information

### I am eligible. How can I access this program?

Speak to your ART clinic. They will ask for your consent to claim this funding from the government on your behalf.

You will not have any out-of-pocket costs to pay. Payment for your cryostorage will be made directly from the Government to your ART clinic.

### How can I find out whether I am eligible under the pre-implantation genetic testing (PGT) category?

PGT is Medicare-funded for people who know they carry a serious genetic disorder and are therefore at risk of having affected children.

Medicare benefits for these tests use MBS items 13207, 73385, 73384, 73386 or 73387. Refer to this [PGT services fact sheet \(PDF\)](#) for more details.

If you have received Medicare benefits for these MBS items, then you are eligible for this funding program. If you have opted to undergo PGT and are **not** a known carrier of a genetic disorder, then you are **not** eligible for funding under this program.

### How many services can I have in the program?

Eligible patients can access cryostorage funding for up to 2 items, for up to ten years. For example, they can store eggs *or* sperm, *and* embryos for a maximum of ten years each.

One 'item' would include all storage samples of the same type of genetic material that are saved in one container. That is, multiple storage of eggs from multiple cycles stored together would comprise one yearly payment of \$600, and so forth.

### How is the ten-year storage limit applied?

There is a ten-year funding limit placed on this program. This means that:

- each type of material has its own ten-year limit. So, the same patient can receive funding for sperm storage for ten years, *and* embryo storage for ten years.
- while there is a ten-year limit for cryostorage, this does not need to be continuous. So, if you store an embryo for one year, then have a two-year break before storing another embryo, the 'break' will not count towards your ten-year limit.

If you wish to continue to preserve your eggs, sperm or embryos after the funding limit expires, you will need to pay for your cryostorage yourself.

### **When happens if I die when my eggs, sperm or embryos are still in storage?**

If you die with one or more embryos in storage and your reproductive partner (the person who created the embryo/s with you) is still alive, they will become eligible for this program and funding may continue in their name. The ART clinic will need to lodge claims under their Medicare number, and funding will continue for the embryo/s in their name as a new patient. The ten-year limit will renew under their name.

If you die with embryos, sperm or eggs in storage and legal arrangements are in place to transfer ownership to another person, payments will continue until the transfer of ownership to another person, for a grace period of up to 2 years. If the original 10-year limit that applied to you is reached within that grace period, the payments will only continue up to that date. Eligibility and funding under this program will then cease.

### **Where can I learn more?**

Call your ART clinic. More information on the program will be published in coming months, including Program Guidelines and Grant Opportunity Guidelines.