



Infertility and Fertility Preservation

What is infertility?

Infertility can be an issue for both women and men. In women, infertility is the inability to get pregnant or keep a pregnancy. In men, it is the inability to cause pregnancy.

What can cause infertility in a cancer survivor?

Some chemotherapy, radiation and surgery can all impact reproductive organs in men and women.

In women, chemotherapy and radiation can lead to premature ovarian failure. In some cases, reproductive organs are permanently affected.

For men, chemotherapy and radiation can lower sperm counts or decrease sperm movement, leading to difficulty causing a pregnancy. While sperm counts may rebound, it may take months or years.

Radiation therapy to the pituitary gland in your brain can decrease hormone levels. These side-effects may prevent pregnancy or normal sexual function in both men and women.

Signs and symptoms of infertility

A sudden warm feeling over your face, neck and chest that may cause you to sweat and your face to turn red. You may experience a heartbeat that is faster than normal. Other possible signs or symptoms include:

- No pregnancy after 6-12 months of trying
- Difficulty having or keeping an erection
- Difficult or painful ejaculation
- A change in the amount of semen you make
- Decreased sex drive
- Stopped menstrual cycle or changes in number of days between cycles

If you are concerned about future fertility, ask for a referral to a reproductive endocrinologist who is knowledgeable about fertility preservation and the impact of cancer regimens.

Washington University Fertility & Reproductive Medicine Center:

 **(314) 286-2400**

 fertility.wustl.edu



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How do you treat infertility in a cancer survivor?

If your cancer treatment puts you at risk of infertility, a specialist will help you determine what steps to take and the various options that are available to you.

For men, sperm banking may be an option before or after treatment. Your doctor may want to obtain a complete semen analysis and viability test to monitor fertility.

To treat infertility in women, specialists are sometimes able to remove a woman’s eggs before or after cancer treatment. Your doctor can also monitor ovarian function and suggest when egg preservation is necessary if ovarian function declines.

Additional Resources

- Washington University Fertility & Reproductive Medicine Center: call (314) 286-2400 or visit fertility.wustl.edu
- American Cancer Society: cancer.org

This handout is for informational purposes only. It should not be used in place of advice or instructions given by your doctor. Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have questions about your care.

Survivorship Program Mission

To improve the quality of life of cancer patients through education, research and wellness. The survivorship program supports patients, families and caregivers throughout the continuum of diagnosis, treatment and beyond.

Visit siteman.wustl.edu for more information.



Siteman Cancer Center complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex.

Atención: hay servicios de asistencia de idiomas disponibles a su disposición sin costo. Llame al 314-747-5682 (TTY: 1-800-735-2966).

注意：免费提供语言协助服务，如有需要敬请致电 314-747-5682 (TTY: 1-800-735-2966)。