

Fertility In Men



One in ten people in the general population are infertile. Most male survivors of cancer in childhood will be able to father children but unfortunately you have had treatment, which puts you at risk of being infertile. The treatments, which may cause problems, include the following:

- Chemotherapy with certain drugs
- Total body irradiation with bone marrow transplant
- Radiotherapy to your testicles or lower abdomen
- Surgery to the testicles or the area near the prostate
- Radiation or surgery to the brain (excluding leukaemia)

If it is not always possible to know for certain if these treatments have affected your ability to father a child. Your doctor will talk to you about the risk and can arrange a blood test which, with a simple examination of your testicles, may give some idea of your chance of normal fertility. To be more certain about fertility you need to have a semen or 'sperm' test. To do this you need to produce a semen sample by masturbation, in private, and have the sample taken quickly to the local hospital for examination in the laboratory. The test looks at the number and activity of the sperm you are able to produce. Your G.P. or clinic, may be able to organise a sperm test.

All results will be treated confidentially and discussed with you in private. If you have a low sperm count this does not automatically mean you are infertile and you should still not have unprotected sex if you do not want to risk a pregnancy.

If you are found to be infertile, or at risk of being infertile, you will need to talk to your partner about this before you start to plan a family.

Specialist advice is available from fertility clinics to which you and your partner can be referred when you feel ready. It is important to know that new techniques have now made it possible to father a child if only one surviving sperm is present or has been stored in the "sperm bank" (through a technique called ICSI).

If you had irradiation to your testes they may not have grown very well. If their small size worries you it may be possible for a surgeon to perform a simple operation to help. Discuss this with your doctor at the clinic.

Remember! Fertility and sexual function are two different things. Most infertile men are capable of having a normal sex life.

visit www.aftercure.org for tips, advice
and other useful websites

Keep a record of sites you find useful: