

Egg freezing is also referred to as oocyte cryopreservation or egg cryopreservation. Egg freezing involves freezing unfertilized eggs, with the intent to thaw them in the future, inseminate or fertilize them with sperm after thawing, and then do an embryo transfer of the fertilized eggs to achieve pregnancy. The first successful birth after egg freezing occurred in South Korea over twenty years ago, but until recently successful egg thawing was a rare occurrence and pregnancies were sporadic. Egg freezing was considered experimental by the American Society for Reproductive Medicine until 2013, but is now considered as an acceptable treatment. The egg is the largest cell in the human body, making freezing difficult. The original technology used for egg freezing is called “slow freezing” Over the past decade, a newer process called “vitrification” has been developed, and research studies are showing that egg survival and pregnancy rates are better when the eggs have been vitrified compared to slow freezing. USF IVF uses vitrification technology exclusively. Pregnancy rates after thawing frozen eggs depend on the number of eggs that survive the thaw, and the age of the patient when her eggs were frozen. Egg freezing is carried out most commonly for cancer patients who will be undergoing chemotherapy or radiation as part of their cancer treatment, through our [Center for Fertility Preservation](#). Since chemotherapy or radiation can affect ovarian function, freezing eggs prior to starting chemotherapy or radiation provides a way for the cancer patient to become pregnant after she is cured. With increasing frequency, healthy reproductive age women who are not in a situation to get pregnant, or are not yet ready to get pregnant, are choosing to freeze their eggs. Fertility declines with age, and the decision to freeze eggs when younger is made so that the woman will have choices available as she gets older. Finally, there are several donor egg banks using frozen eggs to be donated to couples who require donor egg IVF.