

Scientists to freeze women's ovaries

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U.S. researchers are launching an experimental program for young female cancer patients in which an ovary is removed and frozen for possible future use.

The Center for Reproductive Research at Northwestern University said the program is designed for young women who might be at risk of losing their ovarian function and fertility following treatment for cancer.

Teresa Woodruff, associate director of the university's Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center in Chicago says the long-term goal is to be able to extract and mature eggs from cryopreserved ovarian tissues to initiate pregnancies once cancer treatment has been completed.

"This procedure, when developed, could radically change the way infertility is viewed, reduce and eliminate embryo storage and provide better options for women who do not respond to hormonal therapy," said Woodruff.

Eligible participants will have one ovary surgically removed at Northwestern Memorial Hospital in an outpatient procedure before starting cancer treatment. Eighty percent of the ovary will be preserved for the patient's future use and 20 percent will be used by researchers to explore ways to extract and develop immature eggs.

A description of the protocol is available at:

[http:// www.cancer.northwestern.edu/fe ... rvation/brochure.pdf](http://www.cancer.northwestern.edu/fe...rvation/brochure.pdf)

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