

Partner

Increasing numbers of people are considering fertility preservation, and in particular egg freezing, as a way of helping to make sure that when they're ready to start a family, they have the best possible chance of conceiving.

If you've taken the decision to begin your fertility journey, it is not one which you'll have taken lightly. There are many things to consider, including the impact it could have on those around you. If you have a partner, they may be one of the most affected by your decision and you might feel understandably apprehensive about talking to them.

This guide will help you to navigate these conversations – it contains useful insights from a fertility expert and someone who has been through an aided fertility journey first-hand, too.



The authors

Dr. Julie Nekkebroeck

Julie Nekkebroeck is a clinical psychologist and psychotherapist working at Brussels-IVF. She is involved in fertility screenings and counselling patients on oocyte cryo-preservation. Julie helps patients make well-informed decisions supporting them before, during and after treatment to feel ready to embark on (single) motherhood.



Angie Grimberg

Angie Grimberg is a French digital content creator who shares videos and photos of her daily lifestyle on YouTube, Instagram and TikTok. Her channel is focused on the everyday mum, aiming to laugh at the daily life of a parent. She had her first son through IVF and then conceived her second naturally.



Informing a partner about your fertility journey

There's no right or wrong way to inform a partner about your decision to begin your fertility preservation journey. When and how you do it will depend on numerous factors, such as whether it's a long-term partner or a new relationship, any discussions you've had about plans for a family and whether you've talked about fertility preservation previously.

Beginning the conversation

Try to be as open and honest as possible about your reasons and hopes for your fertility journey straight away; you want to ensure that there's no confusion, which can sometimes lead to resentment.

"I have decided to start the process of fertility preservation because..."

"My aim is to..."

"This is important for me because..."

Thoughts from Julie

"Partners are the number one support that women count on during a fertility journey. The presence of a partner at consultations with the doctor, for ultrasounds and certainly on the day of oocyte retrieval can be a testament to their commitment and adds to their greater understanding of the treatment. Partners might feel like back-seat passengers since the treatment mainly concerns the female partner. This may lead to feelings of powerlessness or guilt. Good communication on feelings, thoughts and experiences and keeping a mutual investment in the relationship is key."

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You may not know how your partner will respond when you tell them about your fertility journey, but they're likely to have a few questions to help them understand your feelings and ambitions when it comes to starting a family.

Thinking through these questions in advance may take the pressure off when the moment arrives.

What has made you think about fertility preservation now?

If your decision was made before meeting your partner this may be significant – ultimately, it's a very personal choice and not a reflection on them or your current relationship.

Do you have a timeline in mind?

Conversations around fertility preservation could lead to discussions around future family planning. Remember that it's OK to not have an answer – preserving your fertility gives you the flexibility to start a family when it's right for you, and you may not know when that is yet.

Respect the fact that – where a partner is concerned – this conversation could lead them to consider and work through their own thoughts on a future family, something they may not have done before.

How much will this cost?

Depending on the stage and nature of your relationship, financial implications for you may mean financial implications for your partner. Consider in advance what these implications might be and how much you want to share.

How will this affect our day-to-day life and how many procedures will there be?

Remember that your knowledge of fertility preservation may be far greater than that of your partner! They are likely to be interested in the process, so think through what you feel comfortable sharing, as well as what might impact them and how much you would like for them to get involved.

What can they do to support you?

Think carefully about what help and support would be useful before, during and after your journey, and be as open and honest as you can be. For example, would you like them to accompany you to appointments?

Is this something you are ready for other people to know about?

Consider in advance if you're happy for your partner to discuss your journey with others; you might find it takes the pressure off you if they can share it with some key people, or you might not feel comfortable with that. The decision is completely up to you.



Thoughts from Angie

"When we discovered my infertility, my partner and I started this journey together. His belief is that parenthood is a shared role and therefore it's 50% his responsibility as he brings 50% of the genetic material. The process began with us taking a series of tests and then starting IVF. Here we discovered he also suffered infertility to a small degree too. Our goal was clear: to have a baby together! Without the validation and encouragement of my partner, I may not have started this journey. There were times when I wanted to give up because I was physically or emotionally tired, but he motivated me to keep going!"

Dealing with difficult questions

Hopefully telling your partner about your fertility journey will be a positive, reassuring experience. But what should you do if it isn't?

The conversation should not make you feel uncomfortable, but if it does, consider ways in which you can exit it politely and without causing offence.

"Could we talk about this another time?"

"It would be good if we could take a break from this discussion for now"

"Can I get back to you about that question?"

"I don't know about that yet, I'm still working through some things."



Thoughts from Julie

"Fertility preservation is mostly performed by single women in anticipation of a suitable partner to start a family with. Women who freeze their eggs while being in a relationship often mention a discrepancy between them and their partner in the desire or timing of when to conceive. Fertility preservation might then temporarily alleviate the pressure on the relationship for both partners. Both can buy some time to gain a better understanding of how they relate to these topics. However, open communication on plans, views on the relationship, life goals etc. is mandatory and sometimes professional help can be required to help align perspectives, whether the couple are considering egg freezing or IVF."

Remember, every situation and every person is unique, though the value of being prepared for a discussion in advance is universal.

Additional support: [Questions on fertility preservation?](#) See our [Q&A](#).
[Hear from others about their unique fertility journey](#)

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