

# Doctor

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 think that fertility preservation might be right for you, you'll need to speak to a healthcare professional for information and advice, and to begin the process. You might feel a little apprehensive about the first appointment, which is completely understandable.

This guide has been developed to help you to prepare for your appointment and to navigate the conversations you'll have – it contains useful insights from a healthcare expert, along with someone who has been through the journey first-hand.



## 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.



### Dr. Zoe Williams

Dr. Zoe Williams is an English physician and TV personality based in the UK who also made the decision to freeze her eggs. Her experience in helping bring clarity to medical conversations, including those related to fertility, makes her the perfect candidate in providing support for this guide.

## Beginning the conversation

Try to be as open and honest as possible about your reasons and hopes for fertility preservation, as well as any concerns you have. The healthcare expert can then give you the best/most appropriate advice for your specific circumstances.

*"I'd like to talk to you about my options for fertility preservation because..."*

*"My aim is to..."*

*"I am concerned about..."*



Be prepared for what could be a challenging conversation – this is a personal and sensitive topic – but remember, any healthcare professional is there to offer impartial advice and expertise, not to judge any of your choices.

The questions from the doctor will depend on their role and your individual circumstances and stage in the process. However, the below are some common questions it might be helpful to think through before your appointment.

Also consider, if you're taking someone with you to the appointment, if you'd be happy covering the below with them present.

**Are you medically fit to undergo the procedure?**

The healthcare expert may want to get an initial overview of your health – your diet, exercise routine, smoking and alcohol habits etc. They may also ask about stress levels and your age and any risks associated with that.

**Do you have any medical concerns that may make the journey more difficult?**

You can't be expected to know what is or isn't significant, so be prepared to talk as openly and honestly about your health as you can.

**History of cervical cancer or sexually transmitted diseases**

This might feel like a personal question but it could be important, so be prepared to answer honestly.

**Fertility issues in your family currently or in the past**

Aim to talk to close female relatives about their fertility before your appointment.

**Have you been pregnant in the past?**

**When was your last menstrual period?**

Be as precise as you can be here – consider tracking your periods in advance.

**Have you had any egg freezing procedures done before?**

**Do you have any questions and concerns?**

Considering your questions and concerns in advance will make for a more useful meeting.

There's no expectation that you'll be able to answer every question – it's fine to come back to your doctor later and take a break from the questions if you feel at all uncomfortable.

*"Could I get back to you on that question?"*

*"I need to think that through, can we follow up on that at a later date?"*

The doctor will also need to assess your current fertility health and may examine your body to do this. This is explained in our consultation guide found on [fertilitychoices.com](https://www.fertilitychoices.com).



*Thoughts from Zoe*

"At my first appointment I received a lot of information, some of which was about things I hadn't even considered, such as the number of appointments I might need to attend and the ongoing cost of storing eggs.

The topics covered in this first appointment are very personal and it can be very emotional, but there's also a lot to get through so it can go at quite a quick pace, which makes it difficult to retain all of the information.

My advice is to take somebody along with you, don't be afraid to use a notepad and paper or take notes on your phone, ask for written materials to take away and prepare before your appointment by taking a written list of questions and actually show this to the doctor at the start to ensure you get the answers before you leave."



*Thoughts from Julie*

"The main concern of the fertility doctor and their team is for the patient to make a well-informed decision on if they should freeze their eggs or undergo IVF and have realistic expectations on treatment outcomes. Your doctor should be able to provide you with an estimate on number of eggs needed for reasonable chances and number of treatment cycles required. Proper counselling prevents women from experiencing false hope and makes clear that there are no guarantees.

It's common for patients to have concerns in both IVF and egg freezing about the effects of the hormone treatment, oocyte retrieval, number of eggs to freeze and the financial aspect which can be very different across countries and clinics.

Feel free to make multiple appointments with health professionals and clinics as ones with the right expertise and a clear approach can make all the difference."

Remember, every situation and every person are unique, but being prepared for a discussion in advance is universal.

Additional support on fertility preservation is found in our fertility Q&A on [fertilitychoices.com](https://www.fertilitychoices.com).  
Hear from others about their unique fertility journey here too.

Supported by:



Find out more about your first consultation with our Consultation Guide at [fertilitychoices.com](https://www.fertilitychoices.com)