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NATIONAL BREAKING NEWS

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Cancer survivor pregnant in Aussie first

AAP February 11, 2013 12:14PM

A BREAST cancer survivor who lost her fertility through chemotherapy is pregnant thanks to an Australian first procedure that reimplanted cryogenically frozen ovarian tissue.

The woman, who was 37 when diagnosed with breast cancer, opted to undergo the cryopreservation procedure in 2005 before starting a type of chemotherapy that would severely reduce her chances of falling pregnant.

The woman's ovarian tissue was removed and frozen before her cancer treatment, according to a report published in the Medical Journal of Australia on Monday.

Seven years later, the 43-year-old - who was menopausal but cancer-free - had the preserved tissue reimplanted in her ovaries and began ovulating a few months later.

She underwent in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) treatment and is now in her second trimester of pregnancy.

The pregnancy is one of only 20 of its kind in the world, and only the second in a woman successfully treated for breast cancer, international medical director at Monash IVF, Professor Gabor Kovacs says.

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Prof Kovacs says the procedure offers new hope to women whose fertility may be threatened by cancer treatment.

"It's a simple technique and relatively cheap, as it only requires an operative laparoscopy and a few hours of a laboratory scientist's time," he told AAP.

Prof Kovacs said gynaecologists across Australia could also be trained to perform the procedure.

He said the process was also good news for women who lose their ovary functions because of operations related to diseases such as endometriosis - a condition linked to infertility.

However he warned against using the process for social preservation.

"It's an option for women who are going to lose their fertility, (but) I wouldn't advocate it being used by women who would like to have children later in life," he said.

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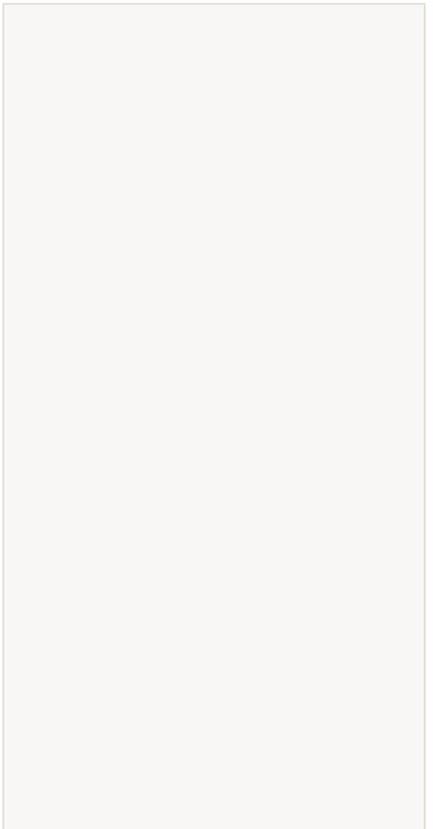
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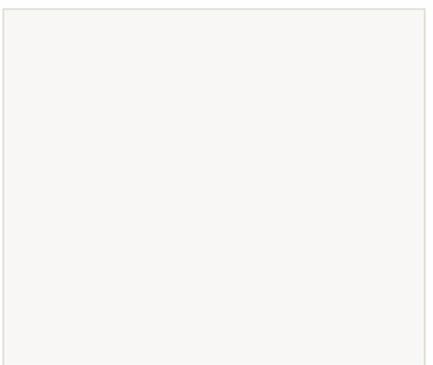
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