

# Weekly Observer

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## An embryo was born after been left in the freezer for 24 years

*Anastasios Manaras*



A 26-year-old woman, Emma Wren, gave birth to a baby girl whose fetus had remained in the freezer for 24 whole years. It was the first embryo to be fed after so many years in the freezer. The next embryo in a freeze, was an embryo in Virginia, USA. who was 19 years in the freezer.

Emma Wren's baby was fertilized 24 years ago in 1992, but the fetus was frozen rather than implanted.

Emma, who was born just a year before the embryo was fertilized in 1991, could not naturally conceive with her husband Benjamin because she had cystic fibrosis. It is a lethal respiratory disease that has a minimum life expectancy of at most 30 years.

She and her husband married 7 years ago and wanted, as they advance, to bring a child to the world. But because they were not and did not want to adopt an orphaned child, they thought of an alternative choice. So they decided to adopt a frozen embryo from the National Fetal Donation Center in Knoxville, Tennessee.



In February, they began the process of selecting their fetus. They were given a book of dozens of possible profiles, with details about parents such as weight, height, age, color of their skin. In March of this year, the frozen embryo was defrosted and then implanted in Emma's uterus. On November 25, after a normal

pregnancy of 40 weeks without any problems, Emma naturally gave birth without an epidural injection, her baby weighed 3.250 grams.

Immediately after the birth of the baby, experts said that this successful birth “indicates that the life of an embryo can be infinite.” Emma, when she learned how many years the fetus was frozen, was very worried that she would not be able to bring this child to the world and even be healthy. What she wanted only was a baby and not a world record.

**Another very impressive information is that Emma’s daughter has already and will have hundreds of brothers because her parents are genetic donors for years now. Many women have brought these babies to the world. Theoretically, embryos could remain frozen for centuries, according to Dr. Kutluk Oktay, a breeding specialist, and an egg biologist at the NYU Winthrop Hospital, which pioneered the freezing of oocytes.**



**“This is the longest freezing time I’ve ever heard, and it just shows that if it is stored properly, the embryo could last for decades or even hundreds of years,” Dr. Oktay. If the embryo is kept in liquid nitrogen and at the right temperature, there is no time limit as far as we know.”**

Storage and freezing of ova is particularly costly and requires a lot of money to cover the costs. Of course, this money should be paid by the owners of the genetic material, who most often refuse to pay for a long time. The 24-year freeze of this embryo eventually cost \$ 50,000 in total. This makes the cases of so old ova, very few.