In Vitro Fertilization

In vitro fertilization involves the ability of sperm in the female vagina to fertilize an egg. If an egg is fertilized, it is transferred to the uterus through the vagina. This step is called embryo transfer. Healthy embryos that are not transferred may be frozen and stored for later use.

Risks. There is an increased risk of multiple preg- nancy with IVF. Several things can be done to help prevent multiple pregnancy. If test results suggest that more eggs are developing, the shot that triggers ovulation may be delayed or not given.

Your specialist also may limit the number of em- bryos transferred to your uterus. This step is called “limiting the number of embryos.”

Intrauterine insemination (IUI): a procedure in which sperm is placed directly into a woman’s vagina, fertilized in a laboratory with the man’s sperm, and then is transferred to the woman’s uterus.

Infertility: The inability to get pregnant after one year of regular sexual intercourse with the use of birth control.

Intrauterine insemination (IUI): a procedure in which sperm is placed directly into a woman’s vagina. This step is called “limiting the number of embryos.”

Intrauterine Insemination: A procedure in which the man’s sperm is placed in a woman’s uterus.

Menstrual Cycle: The monthly process of changes that occur to prepare a woman’s body for a possible pregnancy. A menstrual cycle is defined as the first day of menstrual bleeding of one cycle to the first day of menstrual bleeding of the next cycle.

Menopause: Loss of a pregnancy that is in the uterus.

Multiple Pregnancy: A pregnancy where there are two or more fetuses.

Ovarian Hyperstimulation Syndrome: A condi- tion caused by overstimulation of the ovaries that may cause painful swelling of the ovaries and fluid in the abdomen.

Ovaries: Organs in women that contain the eggs necessary to get pregnant and make important hormones, such as estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone.

Ovulation: The time when an ovary releases an egg.

Primary Ovarian Insufficiency: A condition that causes a woman’s ovaries to stop working before age 40.

Reproductive Endocrinologist: An obstetrician- gynecologist with special training to manage disorders related to hormones of the reproductive system. These specialists also treat infertility.

Sexual intercourse: The act of the penis of the male entering the vagina of the female. Also called “having sex” or “making love.”

Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI): An infec- tion that is spread by sexual contact. Infections include chlamydia, gonorrhea, human papillomavirus (HPV), herpes, syphilis, and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the cause of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).

Sperm: A cell made in the male testicles that can form a female egg.

Testicles: Paired male organs that make sperm and hormones.

Thyroid: A gland located near the base of the neck in front of the windpipe. This gland makes, stores, and releases thyroid hormones.

Thyroid Gland: A gland located near the base of the neck in front of the windpipe. This gland makes, stores, and releases thyroid hormones.

Ultrasound Exam: A test in which sound waves are shone onto parts of the body to create images of the organs. During pregnancy, ultrasound can be used to check the development of the fetus.

Endometriosis: A condition in which endometrial tissue grows in places where it is not supposed to. This can be found in the uterus, ovaries, fallopian tubes, and other pelvic structures.

Fallopian Tubes: Tubes through which an egg travels from the ovary to the uterus.

Fertilization: The time when an egg is fertilized by a sperm.

First Trimester: A term used to describe the first three months of pregnancy.

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In the United States, about 12 in 100 heterosexual couples have trouble getting pregnant. Experts say that women under age 35 who have not gotten pregnant after 1 year of having regular sexual intercourse without using birth control. If you are older than 35, an evaluation is recommended after 6 months of trying. If you are older than 40, talk with your obstetrician-gynecologist (ob-gyn) now about an evaluation.

Infertility is a common problem. In the United States, about 1 in 10 heterosexual couples have trouble getting pregnant. Experts say that women under age 35 who have not gotten pregnant after 1 year of having regular sexual intercourse without using birth control. If you are older than 35, an evaluation is recommended after 6 months of trying. If you are older than 40, talk with your obstetrician-gynecologist (ob-gyn) now about an evaluation.


due to primary ovarian insufficiency (POI), in which the ovaries stop producing eggs and hormones. POI can be caused by a genetic disorder or by chemotherapy or radiation therapy. Women with POI may have difficulty getting pregnant, even if their partner is healthy. Women with POI may consider alternative ways to have a child, such as adoption or in vitro fertilization (IVF).


due to ovulation drugs are used with IUI, multiple pregnancy is higher when gonadotropins are used. Up to 30 percent of pregnancies achieved with IUI are multiple. If too many eggs are used. Gonadotropins also are used when many eggs are needed for ART or other infertility treatments. Gonadotropins are given in the first few days of a woman's menstrual cycle. Blood tests and ultrasound scans are done to monitor the growth of the eggs (follicles). When test results show that follicles have reached a certain size, your doctor or other health professional may signal a follicle to release its mature egg. This process is called ovulation.


due to menopausal hormone replacement therapy (MHT) or other causes have been ruled out. Ovulation stimulation may be used with other infertility treatments.


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