

Preparation for a course of IVF

Managing toxic load

IVF drugs and hormones are extremely invasive and the better you can prepare your body, the more effective they can be. Consider undergoing a 7 or 10 day liver detox program 3-4 weeks before beginning an IVF cycle. This will boost the liver's detoxifying capacity, enabling it to better cope with the intensity of the treatment.

What to Abandon

Avoid smoking and smoky atmospheres: smoking damages the lining of the uterus.

Avoid strenuous exercise such as running or aerobics. Your body needs rest as the hormonal system shuts down to prepare for IVF. Try gentle forms of exercise such as walking or yoga instead.

Avoid chocolate, sugary and processed foods, salty snacks, coffee, tea, cola and other carbonated drinks and alcohol. These all counteract the effects of good nutrition. Some also have a diuretic effect.

What to Adopt

Drink at least 2 litres of water a day. Water benefits every cell in the body and helps ensure that your IVF drugs are properly absorbed.

Eat about 60 grams of protein a day. Insufficient protein in the diet can cause the ovaries to produce fewer eggs during a stimulated cycle.

Supplements

Many clinicians working in this field recommend that you begin taking nutritional supplements at least 3 to 4 months before commencing IVF treatment. However you must discuss this with your IVF specialist.

Here are supplements that have been advocated.

Vitamin B complex will help your body cope with the stress of invasive procedures.

500 mg Vitamin C each day will help collagen production and is vital for wound healing following egg retrieval. There is also evidence suggesting that it may help prevent miscarriage. (However, it is important to reduce Vitamin C intake to 250 mg/ day before transfer.)

Vitamin E enhances healing and improves fertilization rates. (But use the natural version, known as d-alpha-tocopherol.)

Zinc promotes cell formation and wound healing after surgery and is vital for hormone production and implantation. It also plays a vital role in cell division.

Selenium improves fertilisation rates and prevents chromosome breakage.

Magnesium improves fertilisation rates.

Folic Acid helps reduce the risk of an embryo developing spina bifida and aids production of DNA and RNA. (Vitamin B12 should also be taken.)

CoQ10 improves blood flow, enriches the endometrium and may improve fertilisation rates.

Essential Fatty Acids improve blood viscosity and mood support.

DHA helps form body tissue, which is essential for brain development in a fetus.

Bromelain (pineapple & pineapple core) helps the embryo implant.

Other Tips

Arnica: this homeopathic remedy may help prevent damage to internal tissues. Take 4 times daily (6c potency) from one day before egg retrieval until after embryo transfer.

Use a hot water bottle to keep the abdomen warm and assist tissue healing.

Resting as much as you can before embryo transfer will help recovery and healing.

Deep breathing and relaxation techniques encourage good blood flow and energy around the body, especially to the uterus.

Following embryo transfer, rest for a minimum of three days. Rest allows blood to flow to the endometrium, while activity diverts blood flow to extremities and vital organs.

In the two weeks between hormone stimulation and harvesting the eggs, you must avoid:

Caffeine, tobacco, alcohol, drugs, strenuous exercise (including housework), heavy lifting, bouncing activities (such as horseback riding), sun bathing, saunas, hot tubs or baths, jacuzzis, swimming and sexual intercourse.

