



# AFTER TREATMENT

- What happens now?
- Pregnancy test
- Early pregnancy care
- Miscarriage
- Unsuccessful treatment



# What happens now?

Your treatment has been completed and you may be wondering where to from here?

## Waiting for your pregnancy result

Nearly everybody agrees that waiting to see whether you are pregnant is the hardest part of fertility treatment.

Professor Jacky Boivin at the University of Cardiff is well known in the IVF world for her research into psychological reactions to infertility and its treatment. She has gone further than most researchers by trying to find out what can help, studying various interventions in a controlled, scientific way.

Surprisingly, there is one simple thing you can do which can make a big difference. She called it the PRCI (Positive Reappraisal Coping Intervention) but it's just 10 simple phrases, which we have listed below.

IVF patients who read this to themselves twice a day, every day between embryo transfer and the pregnancy test, had much higher scores around feeling positive, feeling less distracted, thinking about future plans, and sustained coping than other IVF patients who read 10 other phrases which had been used previously to promote a positive mood in a non-IVF setting.

If you want to know more, Jacky's paper is freely available at <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18628259>.

Jacky's instructions were to read the following at least twice a day (and more often if you want to).

During this experience I will:

- Try to do something that makes me feel good
- Focus on the positive aspects of the situation
- Find something good in what is happening
- See things positively
- Make the best of the situation
- Try to think about the positive things in my life
- Look on the bright side of things
- Try to do something meaningful
- Focus on the benefits, not just the difficulties
- Learn from the experience

We have these phrases on a pocket-sized card too, available in each of our clinics.

## Pregnancy test

We usually time a pregnancy test 14 days after insemination in IUI and egg collection in IVF. You'll need to have this blood test by 10 am to be sure the results are available the same day. Many women want their nurse to telephone them during the afternoon to find out the result. Others want to share the moment with their husband or a support person – we can put the result in an envelope for you to pick up from the clinic.

## Pregnancy care

If the pregnancy test is positive – congratulations! But it is natural to be a bit anxious as well as excited, because some pregnancies end in an early miscarriage. The chance depends on the woman's age, but we can sometimes give you a better idea from the level of the hormone hCG measured by the pregnancy test.

We prefer to look after you in early pregnancy until the 7-8 week ultrasound scan, and early pregnancy care is included in the cost of treatment for IUI and IVF. If you are using progesterone pessaries, such as Cyclogest, Utrogestan or Crinone, we may schedule a day 18 blood test to see if you need to continue the pessaries for longer. A day 18 test can help clarify an ambiguous pregnancy test result on day 14.

The 7-8 week ultrasound scan takes its name from the length of time after the start of your

treatment, so it really takes place 5-6 weeks after ovulation in clomiphene treatment, IUI or egg collection. This is a vaginal scan. At the scan, the doctor is looking at the size and appearance of a sac in the uterus, the size of the tiny fetus and the rate of its heart beat, and whether there are twins. It is also important to check that the embryo has implanted in the uterus and not in the Fallopian tube of the cervix – this is called an ectopic pregnancy which needs to be treated.

If you prefer, or if it is more convenient, we can refer you to an ultrasonography service but you will need to pay for the scan.



**A little bit of bleeding is normal and occurs in up to half of continuing pregnancies. However, do give your nurse a call, and please don't stop Cyclogest, Utrogestan or Crinone unless we tell you to. Very occasionally an ectopic pregnancy ruptures a blood vessel before the 7-8 week scan – the symptoms are usually sharp and severe pain. If this happens, ring the clinic or the doctor on call straight away, and unless the doctor can arrange for you to be seen at the clinic, go to an emergency clinic. Tell the emergency clinic staff you are pregnant – because sometimes the symptoms are mistaken for appendicitis.**



**For more information, see Fertility Facts on Pregnancy and Miscarriage. [www.fertilityfacts.com.my](http://www.fertilityfacts.com.my)**

## Miscarriage

Sadly about a quarter of positive pregnancy tests after treatment end in pregnancy loss. Nearly all occur before the 7-8 week scan or impending loss is apparent from the scan. Pregnancy loss occurs as frequently after natural conception as it does after fertility treatment, and nearly always is due to the embryo not growing as it should and so it is not preventable.

Common signs of miscarriage are bleeding, cramping that feels like period pains, and the loss of pregnancy symptoms. If you have any of these symptoms or are concerned, ring your nurse at the clinic, and we can often arrange a blood test to give a better idea of what is happening.

Pregnancy loss early in pregnancy can be very hard to bear – it can be hard to tell people and they may not appreciate your grief from a loss that is very dear to you but which they may see as common and normal. This is a really good time to talk to or to see one of our staff, whether to talk about coping with how you feel or coping with other people.

## Telling us the outcome

We need to know the outcome of each treatment, so we will call you or write to you to gather the information we need. Please let us know if you change your address or telephone number. More details relating to this are on the consent forms you will sign before starting treatment.

## Not pregnant this time

You will naturally be sad, disappointed and maybe upset that treatment hasn't worked this time. If you are feeling sadder than usual, please call your nurse or arrange a time to talk with us. Don't underestimate how long it may take to recover your emotional balance, so be gentle on yourself.

We strongly encourage you to make a review appointment with your doctor after each IVF cycle, when you have used your last frozen embryo, or have finished your 'package' of clomiphene or IUI cycles. Even if you are not considering further treatment, it can be helpful to talk things over for a sense of closure. Doctors are often booked up 2-4 weeks ahead, so even if you don't feel like it at the time, it is good to book an appointment soon after your pregnancy test result. Some people make this appointment at the time of treatment, with the intention of cancelling it if it is not needed, which we think is a very good idea.

## Did you know

Once you reach 7 or 8 weeks in your pregnancy you will need to start thinking about who will look after your pregnancy. Your doctor at Fertility Associates can help you arrange antenatal and obstetric care.

