

IVF

In vitro fertilisation (IVF) is a type of treatment to help you have a baby.

You may need this if you want to have a baby and either:

- [need donor sperm or eggs](#)
- [have fertility problems](#)

What IVF is

IVF is where your eggs are removed from your ovaries and fertilised with your partner's or a donor's sperm in a laboratory.

When an egg is fertilised, it is called an embryo. Usually, a number of embryos are produced. A specialist will select the best and put this (or sometimes 2) in your womb. Sometimes others can be frozen for future use.

How to get IVF

You may be able to [get IVF through the HSE](#). The first step in getting tests and treatment is to [talk to your GP](#).

You can also get IVF privately - this is where you pay for it yourself.

How IVF is done

You will be given medicine to help your ovaries to produce eggs.

Once the eggs have been produced, you will have an operation known as 'egg retrieval'.

The eggs are then mixed with sperm. This sperm is from your partner or a donor.

When the eggs and the sperm meet, the aim is for embryos to form. This can take a few days.

When embryos have formed and have been graded for quality, 1 or sometimes 2 of these can be put into your womb. This is through your cervix (the neck of your womb).

Storing embryos

If the rest of the embryos are of good quality, they can be frozen (cryopreserved) for the future.

Number of treatments

Each time you get IVF treatment can be called a 'round' or a 'cycle'.

A round of treatment is made up of cycles.

They are:

- the first (fresh) cycle where eggs are removed and put with sperm to form embryos
- frozen cycles are when you use any extra embryos you had that were frozen

You can get 1 round of treatment for IVF through the HSE, if you meet [the access criteria](#). This includes a fresh cycle and as many frozen cycles with your frozen embryos (if you have them) as are needed to have a baby.

If you get treatment privately you can get more than 1 round of treatment but you will have to pay costs for each extra time.

Having IVF more than once does not guarantee you will have a baby. But having it more than once may increase your chances.

Risks of IVF

IVF does not always result in pregnancy, and it can be both physically and emotionally demanding. Going to [counselling can help](#).

Other risks of IVF include:

- side effects from the medicines used during treatment, such as hot flushes and headaches
- multiple births (such as twins or triplets)
- [an ectopic pregnancy](#)
- ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome - where the ovaries overreact to the medicines used during IVF

IVF success rates

Your age affects how likely you are to get pregnant after IVF treatment.

The chances of having a baby after one fresh cycle of IVF treatment where an embryo is transferred to your womb is:

Age 18 to 34

1 in 3 will get pregnant through IVF, 2 in 3 will not

Age 35 to 37

1 in 4 will get pregnant through IVF, 3 in 4 will not

Age 38 to 39

1 in 6 will get pregnant through IVF, 5 in 6 will not

Age 40 to 42

1 in 10 will get pregnant through IVF, 9 in 10 will not

Age 43 to 44

1 in 25 will get pregnant through IVF, 24 in 25 will not

These figures are for women using their own eggs and their partner's sperm after one 'fresh' cycle of IVF. They are preliminary findings from a UK study.

If you have frozen embryos, your chances increase as you use them.

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