

## Step-By-Step Through An IVF Cycle

**Step 1:** Day 1 of your period. The first official day of your **IVF** treatment cycle is day 1 of your period.

**Step 2:** Stimulating your ovaries.

**Step 3:** Egg retrieval.

**Step 4:** The sperm.

**Step 5:** Fertilisation.

**Step 6:** Embryo development.

**Stage 7:** Embryo transfer.

**Step 8:** The final blood test.

### List of do's and don'ts divided into three sections:

#### Pre-cycle, During cycle, Post-cycle

##### 1) Pre-cycle:

- Staying healthy should be your mantra!
- Always eat a balanced and healthy diet including fruits, nuts and leafy veggies
- Aim and reach a healthy weight. A BMI of over 30 could affect your cycle negatively
- Exercise regularly but moderately.
- Consult your doctor about taking necessary vitamin supplements and other medications
- Do not smoke
- Avoid alcohol or at least try keeping your alcohol intake to bare minimum
- Avoid taking any stress and meditate regularly to stay positive from the beginning to the end
- Avoid caffeine or reduce to one or two caffeinated beverages a day
- Good control of all medical disorders like hypothyroidism, diabetes, hypertension etc.

##### 2) During the cycle:

- The quest to being healthy continues with a balanced diet
- Do make sure to get at least eight hours of adequate sleep
- Drink lots of water and fluids
- The no smoking and drinking alcohol rule continues (For both male and female)
- So does the reduced caffeine intake to one or two cups a day
- Do not take any medication even the over-the-counter medication without consulting your doctor
- Avoid foods like fish throughout the treatment as they are high in mercury and can be harmful
- Do not expose yourself and your partner to extreme heat or radiation as it may reduces fertility
- Keep exercising in moderation
- In case of OHSS (Ovarian hyper stimulation syndrome), drink lots of fluids. Drinking about three to four liters of water can help prevent OHSS.
- Consult your doctor about baby aspirin. It is a blood thinner improves implantation by increasing blood flow to the uterus.
- Good control of all medical disorders like hypothyroidism, diabetes, hypertension etc

##### 3) Post-cycle:

- Continue staying healthy and eating well
- Try to stay relaxed and keep your stress level low. Exercise, Yoga, Medication might help
- Always eat fresh and home-cooked food and avoid food older than 12 hours
- Do not lift heavy weights or strain yourself physically
- Get adequate sleep
- Drink lots of water
- Good control of all medical disorders like hypothyroidism, diabetes, hypertension etc
- Stay Positive!
- Always keep plan B ready like opting for third party reproduction
- Fill up on fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Choose lean proteins,.
- Eat whole grains, like quinoa, farro, and whole-grain pasta.
- Add in legumes, including beans, chickpeas, and lentils.
- Switch to low-fat dairy products.
- Eat healthy fats, such as avocado, extra-virgin olive oil, nuts, and seeds.
- Follow diet chart with dietician if you have other medical disorder
- Light exercise is fine
- You can sleep in any position

#### Don'ts post embryo transfer

- Avoid foods like fish throughout the treatment as they are high in mercury and can be harmful
- Avoid chicken , red meat, sugar, refined grains, and other highly processed foods.
- Cut out salt. Flavor food with herbs and spices instead
- Avoid pineapple and papaya
- Avoid alcohol, cigarette , caffeine
- Avoid heavy exercise, aerobics, running
- In the three to four days before a sperm retrieval, men should avoid ejaculation, manually or vaginally.
- Avoid deep vaginal intercourse, as this can irritate the cervix.
- Avoid these chemicals Formaldehyde
- nail polish
- Parabens, triclosan, and benzophenone
- cosmetics
- moisturizers
- soap
- BPA and other phenols
- food-packaging materials
- Per fluorinated compounds
- stain-resistant materials
- nonstick cooking tools
- Dioxins
- art clay
- Phthalates
- plastic
- medication coatings
- cosmetics with fragrance

You may not be able to influence the outcome, but you can aid the process by following these few do's and don'ts to make your treatment a success.

## What to do for IVF symptoms

For as unpredictable as an IVF cycle can be, one thing's a certainty: myriad physical symptoms. Every woman and every cycle are different, so there's no sure way to know which side effect you'll experience on any given day of any given cycle. Here are some ways to manage or even beat the side effects of fertility drugs.

- Bleeding or spotting
- Call your doctor immediately if this occurs during the cycle.
- Light bleeding or spotting after an egg retrieval is normal. Heavy bleeding is not.
- Do not use tampons.

We advise our patients to expect the worst period of their life after an IVF cycle, because the hormones used not only help the eggs to grow, but also thicken the lining. She cautions that this isn't everyone's experience, but if it's yours, don't worry, and take pain meds as needed.

### GI and digestive issues

There are plenty of options available to treat digestive issues.

**Try taking:** Antacid, a stool softener

**Bloating:** It may seem counter intuitive, but taking in more fluids can relieve bloating. If water is getting tiresome, hydrate yourself with coconut water, low-sugar electrolyte drinks

**Nausea :** If natural remedies aren't working try medications but first, talk to your doctor . Headache and pain

Before taking any drug, confirm with your doctor the right dosage.

#### Exhaustion and fatigue

- Get seven to eight hours of sleep each night.
- Try taking 30- to 45-minute naps during the day.
- Don't overcommit or overbook yourself. Take it easy!

#### Stress and anxiety

- Practice a slow breathing regimen.
- Meditate
- Practice yoga.
- Continue your mild exercise regimen.
- Stick to any established routines and schedules.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Visit a therapist.

#### Hot flashes

- Wear light, breathable clothing.
- Stay in air-conditioned spaces.
- Add a fan to your bedside or desk.
- Stay hydrated with cool water.
- Avoid smoking, spicy foods, and caffeine.
- Practice deep-breathing exercises.
- Do low-impact exercises like swimming, walking, or yoga.

## Expectations for your male partner during IVF

He may not carry the brunt of the IVF cycle, but your husband or partner is an equally important cog in this wheel. Very soon, he'll give the most important sperm sample of his life.

His diet, sleep patterns, and self-care are important, too. Here are ways your male partner can support your IVF efforts and ensure you're both in this together:

- **Drink less:** Not smoking — weed or tobacco — helps, too.
- **Sleep more:** Not getting enough sleep (at least seven to eight hours per night) can affect testosterone levels and sperm quality.
- **Eat well and exercise:** Lower BMI and overall nutrition can improve the quality of sperm collected during IVF.
- **Be supportive:** The most important thing your partner can do is be there for you. Turn to them to talk, listen, snuggle, get help with shots, be proactive about pain medication, manage appointments, and pick up the slack. In short: to be the loving, supportive person you fell in love with.