



GYNAECOLOGY AND FERTILITY CENTRE

PATIENT INFORMATION

Intrauterine insemination

The Agora
Gynaecology and Fertility Centre
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Intrauterine insemination (IUI)

What is IUI?

IUI is the simplest form of assisted conception (help with becoming pregnant) and involves the injection of specially prepared sperm into the womb. It is essential to know that the fallopian tubes are open (patent) and healthy before this treatment is recommended, so you will usually be advised to have a tubal patency test first.

What does it involve?

IUI involves separating faster moving sperm from slow/non-moving sperm and then, using a very fine tube (catheter), passing them through the cervix into the womb.

An IUI treatment cycle can be natural (without medication) or medicated using injections that boost egg production. The insemination itself is timed to correspond with ovulation so that you have the best chance possible of becoming pregnant.

If you are using your partner's sperm, this is referred to as AIH (artificial insemination by husband) and if donor sperm is used it is referred to as DI (donor insemination).

Who might need IUI?

We may recommend IUI if:

- You have unexplained infertility
- There are problems with ovulation
- Your partner has erectile dysfunction (ED) or impotence
- The sperm are mildly abnormal
- There are antisperm antibodies
- You do not have a male partner but are using donated sperm

Before your treatment

Before you have IUI we will carry out a number of tests. These include:

Sperm health: tests to check the numbers and quality of the sperm.

Screening: it is a Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) requirement that both partners are screened for HIV, hepatitis B and C, and syphilis. These tests must be completed within three months of starting treatment and then every two years after that.

The results of your tests will be given to you at one of your appointments.

What happens if I have a positive test result?

If any of your tests are positive, we will offer you or your partner an appointment to discuss the result and make arrangements to refer you or your partner to a specialist clinic. If, after counselling and appropriate medical management, you still wish to have fertility treatment, we will then plan your treatment taking into account the extra precautions needed to protect your partner and future child from any risk of acquiring these infections.

Before your treatment

Before you start your treatment cycle, please make sure you have been advised about:

- The limitations and possible outcomes of the proposed treatment
- The possible side-effects and risks of the treatment
- The techniques involved
- The possible disruption to your life
- The availability of counselling
- The clinic's duty to consider the welfare of any child resulting from treatment with us

What does the procedure involve?

Before starting your IUI cycle your treatment programme will be explained to you in detail by one of our nurses.

- If you are not having fertility medication, insemination is timed between day 12 and day 16 of your monthly cycle (day one is the first day of your period). You may have a urine test to check when you are ovulating, or you can use an ovulation predictor kit if you prefer
- If you are being prescribed fertility medication, you will be given vaginal ultrasound scans; these show the development of the eggs so that you can be given a hormone injection which enables them to be released when they are mature
- On the morning of insemination, your partner will need to produce a fresh sperm sample that will then be washed and prepared in the laboratory. If you are using donor sperm this will be thawed in a lab. The prepared sperm sample is then mixed with a small amount of culture fluid and drawn into a syringe in readiness for the procedure itself
- During the insemination the specialist nurse will gently insert a speculum into your vagina to view the cervix. Cervical secretions are first removed and then a fine plastic catheter is passed gently through your cervix into the uterus. The syringe is attached and the sperm are slowly injected. This may feel slightly uncomfortable, like mild period pain

Do I need to take time off work?

There is no need to take time off work or limit your usual daily activities following IUI. However, you should plan for between two and four visits to the Agora Clinic during your treatment cycle for scans and the insemination itself.

After your treatment

If you do not have a period two weeks after insemination, you should carry out a pregnancy test, either using a home pregnancy testing kit or by coming into the clinic for a blood test. If the test result is positive we can arrange for you to come in for an early pregnancy scan three weeks later (you will be seven weeks pregnant at this stage).

Following insemination, you will be prescribed progesterone pessaries (Cyclogest) to take each night for 14 days.

Counselling

At the Agora Clinic, we believe that providing counselling is a vital part of the overall service we offer. All patients are offered specialist independent fertility counselling before, during and after treatment. For women or couples who are considering having treatment with donor sperm, it is particularly important to have counselling so that you can explore all the implications, both for you and your child.

Having treatment for fertility problems can cause difficult and often painful emotions for those involved. Being unable to have a child naturally, the fear of never being able to conceive, or a sense of bereavement if you have had a miscarriage, can make you feel that your sense of purpose is being threatened, that your future is on hold, or that you have 'failed'. Relationships sometimes become strained, often because each partner is dealing with the situation differently. Although this is very normal, it can cause people to feel confused and isolated.

The process of counselling enables you, either individually or as a couple, to explore your thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in a safe, non-judgmental space. You may decide to make changes to your life, or be able to come to terms with things that cannot be changed. Often it is easier to make decisions about your situation when you talk to someone who isn't directly involved.

Deborah Sloan is our independent counsellor. She is based in Brighton and you can contact her directly on: 07736 705904 or by email: deborah@deborahsloancounselling.com to arrange your appointment.

Consent forms

Before starting your treatment cycle you will be asked to read and sign a number of forms consenting to the IUI treatment. These will all be discussed at your nurse consultation, but if you have any queries please contact us for more information.

Medication

Any medication needed for your treatment will be prescribed at the Agora and either delivered to you using our home delivery service or via a prescription issued for collection at one of the local pharmacies. The drugs are used in much lower doses than in IVF, and enhance the chances of successful treatment by stimulating the production of two or three follicles, rather than one. This is called superovulation.

Occasionally, if more than three follicles develop, we will advise cancelling the cycle and restarting on a lower drug dose because of the increased risk of multiple pregnancy. This risk is, however, far lower than with IVF and the overall chance of treatment being successful is approximately 10% per cycle.

You will be shown how to administer any medication at your nurse consultation, before starting your IUI treatment.

GYNAECOLOGY AND FERTILITY CENTRE**Contact information**

All treatment cycles are coordinated by our fertility nurse specialists. Please contact any one of them if you have any questions or concerns about your treatment.

The Agora Gynaecology and Fertility Centre: 01273 229411

Urgent calls for out of hours emergencies: 07912 341857

Email: info@agoraclinic.co.uk

In the unlikely event that you are unable to make contact with us, your GP or local Accident & Emergency Department will be able to provide assistance.

Further information

Infertility Network UK is a charity that offers help, advice, information and support in dealing with many infertility issues:

Infertility Network UK

Charter House
43, St Leonards Road
Bexhill on Sea
TN40 1JA

Tel: 01424 732361
www.infertility.networkuk.com

The medical information in this leaflet is provided as an educational resource only. It is not intended to replace the advice of your GP or medical team and should not be used or relied upon for any diagnostic or treatment purposes. The information has been prepared by Dr Carole Gilling-Smith, Consultant Gynaecologist and Medical Director of the Agora Gynaecology and Fertility Centre. It was last updated in August 2014.

