

**Patient  
Information**

# In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF)

## Introduction

This leaflet gives you information about the process of IVF as advised by your specialist.

In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) is an assisted method of conception which increases the chance of pregnancy by placing fertilized ova or eggs directly into the uterus or womb. The fertilised eggs are called embryos.

## How does the IVF work?

Each fresh IVF cycle has 5 main steps:

### Step 1 - Down regulation

For 2 to 3 weeks you take a drug in the form of a nasal spray or injection to temporarily switch off the hormonal messages from the brain to the ovaries, preventing ovulation.

### Step 2 - Ovarian stimulation

Daily injections stimulate the ovaries to produce several eggs. These are monitored by ultrasound scans. When they reach the right size another drug is given to ripen the eggs and prepare them for removal.

### Step 3 - Egg retrieval

The fluid within each follicle is gently sucked out and given to the embryologists who search for the eggs using a microscope. This procedure takes about 20 minutes and almost all women are fully recovered and able to go home after a couple of hours.

To minimise the discomfort of this procedure, the egg recovery is carried out either using sedation or general anaesthetic (while you are asleep).

Before this procedure, the man produces a sample of semen which is prepared in a special way before being placed with the eggs.

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Department

**Gynaecology**

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Sperm and eggs are incubated overnight in a special fluid that provides them with all the right nutrients to allow fertilisation to happen. The next morning, the eggs are checked for signs of fertilisation. The couple will be contacted by telephone and given the result of fertilisation by the embryologist from the Fertility Unit.

**Step 5 - Embryo transfer**

Embryos are placed gently inside the womb on the 2nd, 3rd or 5th day after egg retrieval. Embryo transfer is an outpatient procedure which takes only a few minutes to perform. After the embryo transfer, you will be advised to use hormone vaginal pessaries for 2 weeks until you are due to take a pregnancy test.

**Success rates**

Many factors influence the successful outcome in the IVF cycle including the woman's age, her health and number of embryos transferred to the womb. Success rates vary with different fertility units. We advise you to visit the fertility website for more information (details are at the end of this leaflet).

**Contact information**

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the fertility nurses through Mrs K Reddy's secretary on the number below:

**Cotswold Fertility Unit**

Tel: 0300 422 3128

Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 4:00pm

Website: [www.cotswoldfertilityunit.co.uk](http://www.cotswoldfertilityunit.co.uk)

**Further information**

Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority

Website: [www.hfea.gov.uk](http://www.hfea.gov.uk)

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