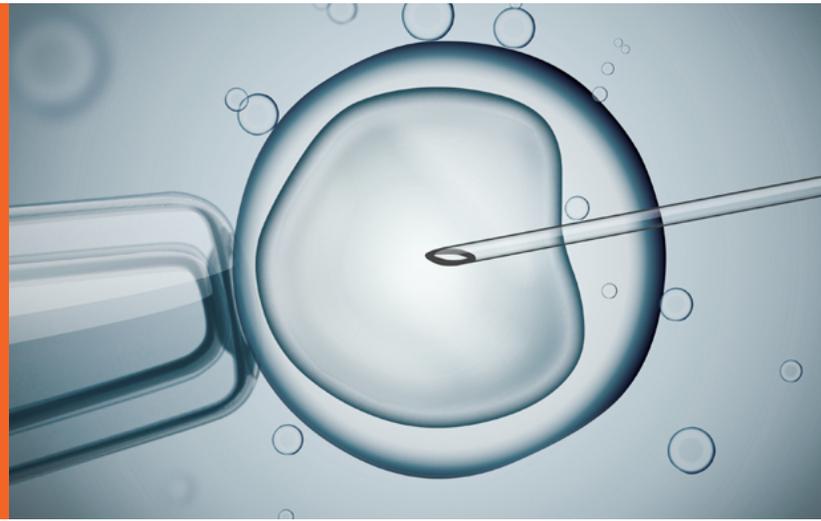


# What is In Vitro Fertilization?

Updated: December 2018

In vitro fertilization (IVF) is a form of assisted reproductive technology.



In IVF, sperm are combined with an egg or eggs in a Petri dish in an attempt to achieve fertilization. The embryos which result from this process are then either transferred into the uterus in the hopes of beginning a pregnancy or cryopreserved (frozen) for future use.

IVF is considered a viable option for a number of diagnosis, including:

- Endometriosis
- Polycystic ovarian syndrome
- Tubal damage or blocked tubes
- Cervical factor

- Immunological factors
- Unexplained infertility

If you are considering IVF to get pregnant, let the following IVF success tips help you and your partner relax, and maximize your chances of getting pregnant.

### **IVF Success Tip #1: Do your homework**

It takes time and patience to select a successful IVF center. When you screen potential IVF sites, ask questions such as:

- Years in practice
- Live birth rate per IVF cycle
- Rate of multiples (twins or higher)



- Qualifications of embryologist and laboratory staff
- Success rate for your particular diagnosis and age group

**IVF Success Tip #2: Take time to relax**

It's important to balance the stressful experience of IVF with pleasurable activities that promote relaxation and wellness. Because of the intense stress involved, attempt to keep other life stressors to a minimum.

**IVF Success Tip #3: Talk to a counselor**

Consider talking to a mental health counselor if you feel anxious, depressed, or if your relationship feels strained. Some findings show that being involved in a stress management program or undergoing counseling may even boost your chances of conceiving.

**IVF Success Tip #4: Be patient**

Many couples find that the intensity and waiting involved with IVF (screenings, testing, and procedures) is almost more than they can bear. Some couples have already waited months and even years to get pregnant. Then, they are immediately disappointed to find that the IVF process involves a time commitment. As you focus on staying patient during this time, an important IVF success tip is to distract yourself! Make plans to stay active with friends and family. Discover a hobby or a new activity that is relaxing and fun. Try to keep your mind off of any worries or potential setbacks during the IVF journey. And, most importantly, have hope that your doctors will do all they can to help you get pregnant and have a healthy baby.

### **IVF Success Tip #5: Start early**

Begin the IVF cycle as soon as you and your doctor decide that you are a good candidate for in vitro fertilization. Because fertility declines with starting IVF early on is important. If you are over 30 and have struggled to conceive after 6 months, talk to your doctor to see what options you have, including IVF.

### **IVF Success Tip #6: Ask about alternative therapies**

Multiple studies have shown that acupuncture may be beneficial to those undergoing the IVF process when performed within one day of the embryo transfer. Ask your fertility specialist about alternative therapies to see if they may help your situation.

### **IVF Success Tip #7: Don't bypass the semen analysis**

Sperm quality can change as time passes, and as little as one year passing by can affect sperm count, shape and movement. It is important to check your semen, from both known and unknown donors, before beginning an IVF cycle, to determine whether there is an infection present, among other potential issues.

### **IVF Success Tip #8: Discuss Your LifeStyle Choices with your Doctor**

Weight, exercise and diet may all affect your chances at IVF success, as do behaviors such as smoking, excessive drinking, and drug use. Make sure you are honest with your doctor about your choices, so that you can modify

them accordingly in order to boost your chances of IVF success.

### **IVF Success Tip #9: Talk openly with your doctor**

Effective communication with your physician is a vital IVF success tip. Write down questions you may have about IVF, then talk with your doctor about these concerns. Once you understand more about how IVF may help, you can take immediate measures to formulate a plan for successful conception.

### **Overall, the following factors can affect IVF success:**

1. Your age (those under 35 have the best chances of pregnancy)
2. The health of your uterus
3. The quality of the semen and sperm you will be using
4. The health and development of the embryo after fertilization
5. The number of embryos transferred (usually less are transferred if you are younger)
6. The length of the luteal phase after transfer is complete (a luteal phase that is too short is often less desirable)

### **Multiple embryos and IVF**

If you are under age 35, the Society for Assisted Reproductive Technology (SART) recommends that only one embryo

should be transferred during IVF, as there is already a greater chance of success as compared to those over 35.

Also, if you are under age 35, transferring two embryos might increase your chances of having pregnancy complications or multiple births. With multiple births, you may be at risk for a premature delivery. Premature births can result in low birth rates and developmental problems.

Sometimes two or more embryos are implanted in individuals over 35 to increase IVF success. Still, when multiple embryos implant during IVF, the likelihood of complications is increased in pregnancy.

### **Choose your physician wisely**

Even if age is not a factor and time is on your side, choosing a reputable clinic can save you countless dollars, heartache, and time.

Be an educated patient. Participate fully in your own treatment, ask as many questions as you require, and get support from outside sources if you need to as well. Support groups and message boards abound, as do competent therapists who specialize in this area.

### **It is important to understand the risks associated with an IVF procedure**

Rarely, your ovaries can become hyperstimulated, which can result

in severe bloating and pain. It is important to discuss your individual risk of ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome with your physician prior to the procedure, as well as the risks associated with the anesthesia which will be utilized during retrieval.

### **Predicting your IVF success**

As you can imagine, undergoing IVF is a very emotional and stressful experience for all involved, especially given all the time, work and money spent to make this pregnancy happen.

That's why it is so important to be open and honest with your fertility specialist. Ask about the different factors that might affect your individual fertility situation. Discuss problems that might negatively impact your IVF success.

### **Be educated, be proactive, be a participant in your own IVF cycle**

The first baby born through In vitro fertilization is now in her thirties. This process has resulted in the birth of over three million babies world wide. Learn as much as you can about IVF, your own fertility, and your potential for IVF success. Ask questions, get support, and stay positive. The more you know, the better your chances for conception will be.



## Bibliography

"American Pregnancy Association. In Vitro Fertilization: IVF.

American Society of Reproductive Medicine. Frequently Asked Questions About Infertility.

Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) Report: Commonly Asked Questions.

Attain IVF- [www.attainfertility.com](http://www.attainfertility.com)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) Report: National Summary.

Medicinenet.com-<http://www.medterms.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=7222>

National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine. Acupuncture Shows Promise in Improving Rates of Pregnancy Following IVF. CDC. 2006

National Institutes of Health: Want to get pregnant? Just relax.

Society for Assisted Reproductive Technology. Patient Evaluation, CDC. 2006

The American Fertility Association-[www.theafa.org](http://www.theafa.org)

The Practice Committee of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine and the Practice Committee of the Society for Assisted

Reproductive Technology. SART. Success Rates.

2009Whelan, Corey. "Sticking It To Your Wife

- With Infertility Medication". Available at: <http://www.examiner.com/x-24753-Infertility-Miscarriage-Examiner-y2010m2d21-Sticking-it-to-your-wife-with-infertility-medication>.

17 March 2010.



**FAMILY  
EQUALITY  
COUNCIL**

Advancing Equality for  
LGBTQ Families

Copyright © 2018 Family Equality Council

**Learn more & contact Family  
Equality staff at:  
[www.familyequality.org/p2p](http://www.familyequality.org/p2p)**