

Information Sheet - IVF Embryo Transfer

Wow, **you're** really at the business end of things now! Whether you are doing frozen or fresh transfer, here are a few pointers and suggestions to aid the process:

- **Keep well hydrated** - Dehydration can cause extra cervical irritation during embryo transfer, and we really **don't** want that!
- **Sex** - Have sex the morning before transfer. This gets all the right hormones flowing and primes the immune system for a pregnancy. It also moderates the nervous system and reduces stress. Many IVF clinics **don't** advise intercourse between egg retrieval & transfer but research has shown it to be beneficial.
- **Eat a clean, healthy diet** - Nutrition is important throughout, but a reminder: Have lots of good fats including avocados, nuts, seeds, lots of fresh vegetables, a little fresh fruit, and have protein with every meal. A high protein diet has been linked to better IVF outcomes, continue this through your 2 week wait (& actually, you need a stack of protein in pregnancy, so just settle in & get used to it!).
- **Avoid** processed foods, sugar, too many raw foods, cold drinks and cold foods, and focus more on warm, cooked, easy to digest, nourishing foods. And avoid any foods that may trigger an inflammatory response for you.
- **Pineapple** - Pineapple, particularly the core, contains an enzyme called bromelain that has been associated with higher rates of implantation. It has a gentle blood thinning effect and reduces inflammation. It must be fresh pineapple, not canned as heat destroys the enzyme, and you will need to consume around 1/4 of a small pineapple per day for a week after transfer. If you are taking aspirin or blood thinners you can skip this.
- **Ensure you are taking some essential fatty acids** - If you are not already taking a high quality fish oil or DHA supplement or other essential fatty acids, start this a couple of weeks prior to egg collection. This helps both the endometrial lining and the blastocyst implantation. And babies need it for brain and nervous system development. **Don't** take rancid fish oil, it is important with this supplement to take a high quality oil.
- **REST** - This procedure **doesn't** feel as taxing on your bod as the egg retrieval, but rest is still really important. Our culture has a real '**soldier on**' attitude. **DON'T**. Take a couple of days to rest, relax and really chill out. In my experience it makes a lot of difference to the outcome, especially if you have a stressful job, do shift work or heavy physical work (nurses & midwives, I am looking at you!). **Don't** lift heavy things for the whole 2 week wait, that includes washing baskets and shopping bags.
- **Caffeine** - Be mindful of your caffeine intake. Not everyone needs to avoid it, but really take some time to consider your reaction to caffeine and whether its appropriate for you. If you get a bit racy and anxious with a cup of coffee, avoid it, and if you have more than 1 per day definitely cut back. But if you tolerate caffeine well, 1 cup of coffee a day, and maybe a tea or 2, should be fine.
- **Fun** - The two week wait can be difficult, and stress is a major barrier fertility. Ensure sure you do things that will increase your oxytocin levels and decrease your adrenal response. Massage, acupuncture & restorative yoga classes are some suggestions, but also look for things you can do each day that will make you feel good and relieve stress, like cuddles with a partner or pet, sex, beach or bush walks, catching up for a cuppa with friends, whatever enhances your feeling of wellbeing. Prioritise enjoyment! This is underrated but very important for a successful transfer.
- **Meditation & relaxation** - Do your relaxation or meditation practice regularly both in the lead up and after your ET and for the 2 week wait. The effect of stress on fertility is profound, so use all

your stress reduction techniques regularly, and let me know if you are feeling stressed or anxious during this time.

- **Acupuncture** - ensure you book in for a pre and post embryo transfer treatment, and then another treatment 4 days after ET. Acupuncture reduces the effect of stress on the body and can activate the relaxation response, it will also increase circulation in the abdomen, reduce inflammation, and moderates your immune system.
- **Herbs** - I am a big fan of herbs for the 2 weeks after transfer, they support progesterone way better than the cream or pessaries and are adaptogenic (ie help your stress response). If you have had a miscarriage in the past it is longer than 2 weeks.
- **NO castor oil packs** - sure, I love them, but after ET is not the time! They could potentially disrupt implantation or cause a miscarriage.
- Do not swim, have a bath, hot tub, or do vigorous exercise for a week (that includes some of the more strenuous housework) after your procedure, and avoid activities that involve a lot of bouncing like trampolining and horseback riding.
- Keep your abdomen, lower back & feet warm and covered at all times.

Many, many fruitful blessings to you! xx