

Pre-Pregnancy Considerations

Take folic acid regularly.

Folic acid, or folate, in particular, is necessary for the development of the baby's central nervous system. Birth defects such as spina bifida and other neural tube defects have been linked to folate deficiency.

Avoid drugs.

There are drugs that can impair sperm production and motility and can disrupt the female reproductive system making conception and implantation difficult.

Avoid alcohol.

Tony Rutherford, of the British Fertility Society, said: "This is further evidence to suggest that alcohol does have an impact and that those women who try for a baby should think about their lifestyle choices."

Stop smoking.

A Dutch infertility study in 2005 found that the overall effect of smoking two or more cigarettes per day for one year reduced a woman's chance of carrying a IVF pregnancy to term by 28%.

Eat well.

- * Take your vitamins.
- * Drink whole milk.
- * Cut out trans fat from your diet.
- * Use unsaturated vegetable oils.
- * Eat more vegetable protein.
- * Increase your iron intake.
- * Stay hydrated.
- * Eat plenty of fiber.
- * Maintain a normal BMI.

Reduce Caffeine.

According to a study - when it comes to fertility, caffeine can actually make a bad situation worse. Drinking more than four cups of coffee a day can decrease fertility by 26%.

Exercise in moderation.

This needs to be discussed with your RE for there are studies which recommends women to opt for milder forms of exercise, like walking, swimming or hatha yoga. Exercising for sufficient body mass is important to ovulate and menstruate.

However, there are studies published in the journal Obstetrics and Gynecology suggests there's at least one instance when limiting exercise may be the proper prescription—trying to conceive via ivf.

Consult with your RE for the best option that would suit you.

Go to the dentist.

There is research that suggests gum disease - an infection of the gums caused by plaque - may increase the risk of delivering preterm or low-birth-weight babies.

Get enough sleep.

Sleep affects hormones and specifically those responsible for the menstrual cycle and ovulation. Lowered sleep levels can also reduce the hormones responsible for appetite regulation which can result in unhealthy eating patterns.

Speak to your RE about all the medications, vitamins and/or herbs you're taking.

This is to ensure nothing will happen during unusual interactions between prescribed drugs and others.



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Here are other tips to prepare for IVF:

Gather information and plan ahead.

The more you know and understand about the IVF process, the less stress you may feel. Look for articles and reading materials about the process and research an IVF clinic, to which you will feel comfortable in.

Be prepared to decide – on a lot of hard things too.

There will be decisions, which may have moral and religious implications. Decisions on how many embryos will be transferred to maximize pregnancy chances, what you will do with extra eggs and/or embryos, etc. Be prepared.

Tend to your psyche and your relationships.

Struggle with infertility may lead to strain in relationships, distress and isolation. You will want to be in a good place emotionally and have your relationship on solid ground before starting an IVF cycle.

Facilitate communication with your partner by setting a limited amount of time to talk about IVF, possibly 20 minutes every day, and then putting infertility talk aside. Counseling can be an option.

Garner your support.

Gather your friends and family for support. You can also join in communities or on-line forums to share your experience. A great deal of healing can come from others who understand.

Identify your stresses and your coping mechanisms.

Exercise can help alleviate stress. Same thing with humor and laughing about things can be good for your health. Stress management classes, listening to relaxation tapes and other mind/body techniques used regularly can help in handling these feelings and dealing with treatment procedures.

Decide what you have control over and what you don't.

You do have control over the choices you make in your daily life while how the treatment course progresses is usually out of your hands. Avoid major undertakings that could add stress in your life.

Anticipate problem areas.

Plan for possible changes and difficult times during your cycle, such as the waiting period after transfer and the day you will get the results. Expect the unexpected.

There are possibilities for failure at every step of the cycle, from a poor response to medication to no fertilization after retrieval. This will give you breathing space and time to adjust to the news before dealing with others.

Look past this cycle at the beginning.

No matter what the outcome of IVF, you need to recognize you have succeeded in doing all that is within your power to have a child and can feel good about yourself. Having done so minimizes future regrets.

And don't forget the most important tip:

Think positive!



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