



## Preparing for Treatment

**Fit For Fertility:** Being at your best physically, mentally and emotionally is the best possible preparation for treatment and pregnancy. Optimising your general health & wellbeing contributes to the overall chances of success. A healthy diet & lifestyle, minimal alcohol and caffeine intake and no cigarette smoking or “recreational drug” use is essential. Women should take Folic Acid 400 mcg in the three months prior to conception & continue to take it as directed up until the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. Where you suffer from a medical condition ensure in advance that your treatment is optimal. Inform Clinic Staff of the details of any alternative therapies you are using, e.g. Acupuncture, herbal remedies etc. Extremes of weight (over or under) can reduce a woman’s chance of conception and on-going pregnancy. The Clinic recommends that fertility treatment is only offered when the female BMI is no less than 19 and no more than 30 kg/m<sup>2</sup>. Excess weight in men is also associated with a reduction in chances of conception.

**Setting the Agenda:** Give your treatment the priority it deserves. Review your weekly schedule. Find time and space for yourselves and your treatment. We can predict when many of your clinic visits and procedures will take place, but, unfortunately we cannot predict them all. Ensure you both are available throughout treatment and can answer the necessary phone calls.

**Advice for Men:** The male partner is not required to attend all visits. He will need to attend at certain key times, for investigations, discussion, consents and to provide sperm for use in treatment. To minimise the possibility of compromising the sperm sample quality for treatment, continue to ejaculate twice a week approximately. By doing so, you ensure that you will have ejaculated no more than five days and no less than two days from the probable time of IVF or ICSI.

**Support & Counselling:** Failing to conceive is stressful. Feelings of anger, shame, guilt, powerlessness and despair may develop. Relationships with the partner, family members and friends may become strained leading to a breakdown in communication and feelings of isolation. The IVF/ ICSI treatment required to address fertility issues can of itself add further to this stress. IVF/ICSI is demanding, on many levels, physical, mental, emotional and financial. Many difficult decisions have to be faced before, during and after treatment. Lack of treatment success can be devastating. We strongly recommend that all couple’s consider at least one visit with a Fertility Counsellor before embarking on treatment. While all Clinic staff endeavour to support couples both medically and emotionally as they proceed through treatment, being able to talk to a professional counsellor can make the process easier. Ms Kay Duff, an independent fertility counsellor attached to the clinic, has considerable expertise in relationship and fertility counselling. Ms Duff can be contacted confidentially at 01-8319625.