

Fertility

RFQs

- How long have you been trying to get pregnant?
- Are you having regular periods?
- Have you ever had a sexually transmissible infection?
- Do either of you have any children, or have you ever been pregnant before? Please tell me more...

Provide

- 80% of couples where the female is aged <40y and who are having regular intercourse will conceive within 12m, and 90% within 24m.
- Chances of conception are increased by having sex every 2–3 days through the cycle, limiting alcohol to 1–2 units per week for women and 21 units per week for men, having a BMI between 20 and 25, and stopping smoking.
- Evaluate, investigate and refer couples who have failed to conceive after 12m of unprotected intercourse.
- For women aged >36y or those with a known cause for infertility, refer sooner.
- Before referral, men should have a semen analysis, repeated within 3m if the results are abnormal.
- Women should have a D1–5 FSH/LH and a D21 (or 7d before period due) progesterone to assess ovarian reserve and ovulation. Rubella status, chlamydia screening and an up-to-date smear are also required.
- Other tests (e.g. prolactin, TSH) should only be done if clinically indicated.
- Prior to commencing IVF treatment, viral serology for HIV, hep B and hep C is needed for both partners.
- Treatment of infertility depends on the cause (see table above), but couples with unexplained fertility should not undergo ovulation induction or IUI, but rather have IVF after 2y of trying to conceive.
- NICE recommends that eligible women aged <40y should receive 3 full cycles of IVF, and women aged 40–42y should receive 1 full cycle of IVF, through the NHS.
- Local commissioning policies may vary.
- Studies have shown that infertility is as psychologically stressful for women as a cancer diagnosis – they need support.
- Not all fertility treatments on offer are evidence-based.

Safety net:

Would you mind reading this leaflet about preparing for a healthy pregnancy,. Please let me know if you need any support with making sure that you are both as healthy as possible in the run up to you being pregnant?

(for example: Do any medicines need to be reviewed or do any medical conditions need to be reviewed by a specialist before conception (eg epilepsy medications or health conditions.) Please let me know if you haven't conceived after 12 months of trying.