



Your Pregnancy

IVFAustralia's guide to early pregnancy care



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Many congratulations on conceiving. We have put together this booklet to guide you through the early stages of your pregnancy, including general health tips and arranging your care for the rest of the pregnancy.

Having a positive pregnancy test is a very exciting moment. There is still, however, a long way to go and it is important that you take extra care of yourself over the next few weeks.

In particular, we would strongly advise you to keep the exciting news of your pregnancy to yourself and your immediate family until you have safely passed through the first few weeks of the pregnancy.

In the meantime you should maintain a healthy lifestyle, a balanced diet, and try to exercise reasonably regularly.

Although you may have undergone intensive treatment to become pregnant, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that, once you get through the first few weeks of pregnancy, the rest of the pregnancy and the birth should be no different to a naturally conceived pregnancy.

Remember we are very happy for you to call us at any time if you have any concerns. You've worked very hard to get to this point and we at IVFAustralia are keen to make sure that you continue to receive the very highest level of care during the next few critical weeks.



A/Prof Peter Illingworth – Medical Director, IVFAustralia

Important dates

Your expected date of delivery

Your last menstruation date

Date of embryo transfer

Early pregnancy care

Duration of your pregnancy

Working out how many weeks pregnant you are can be very confusing when you have conceived from IVF, however we can help you determine this at the time of your positive pregnancy test.

Traditionally, the **duration of a pregnancy** is calculated from the first day of the last menstrual period and 40 weeks from this date is the expected date of delivery. The **duration of a pregnancy** is therefore two weeks more than the **age of the fetus**.

In IVF, due to the medication you would have taken throughout treatment, the date of the last period is not a helpful guide. However what we do know with certainty is the exact age of the embryo on the day of transfer. So in order to calculate the duration of your pregnancy in weeks, add two weeks to the **age of the embryo**.

Here are a few steps to help you calculate this:

1. Work out the number of days since your embryo transfer.
2. Add either 19 days (for a blastocyst transfer) or 16 days for a Day 2 transfer
3. Divide the total number of days by 7 to work out the number of weeks.

Early pregnancy bleeding

It is common for women to experience some spotting through early pregnancy and in some cases, throughout their entire pregnancy, particularly around the time when they would normally have their period. We understand it is very concerning when this occurs. However, it is important to remember that, early pregnancy bleeding is not necessarily a sign of an imminent miscarriage.

Ectopic pregnancy (i.e. a pregnancy that implants in the fallopian tube instead of the uterus) is rare. It occurs in 1–4% of IVF pregnancies, usually only when there is pre-existing fallopian tube damage. The signs of a possible ectopic pregnancy are abnormal hormone levels, brown vaginal bleeding and abdominal pain. Please contact us immediately if you have concerns. If you have severe pain you should proceed directly to the nearest hospital.

Whatever the suspected cause, if you experience fresh red bleeding, abdominal pain or repeated spotting, contact your clinic for advice. An ultrasound scan may be recommended to confirm the status of your pregnancy.

Diet

A healthy lifestyle also means eating a well balanced diet with fresh fruit and vegetables and minimal “junk” food. It is also important to keep up your fluids by drinking at least one litre of water daily (which can be supplemented with fruit juice).

Weight gain during pregnancy

The average weight gain during pregnancy should be between 10 and 13 kgs but could be anywhere up to 20 kgs. The average weight gain each week should be about 300 grams.

Many women will achieve the majority of their weight gain in pregnancy during the first 20 weeks. Others will experience a large 'growth spurt' during the middle of their pregnancy up until about 32 weeks.

Exercise during pregnancy

It is recommended pregnant women avoid high impact exercise, particularly during the first 12 weeks of their pregnancy, and it is best to avoid contact sports altogether. Low impact exercise such as walking and swimming is safe and encouraged.

It can also be beneficial to take special pre-natal yoga classes. Yoga can help with flexibility and core muscle strength, which can help you throughout and after your pregnancy. *Yoga: www.findyoga.com.au*

Sex during pregnancy

Many women ask whether it is safe to have sex and experience an orgasm during pregnancy. The answer is yes, it is safe, however how you feel emotionally and physically will dictate whether you feel like it or not. You may find that the extra blood flow throughout the body can increase sensitivity and sexual enjoyment. Or you may find that with the fatigue and nausea associated with early pregnancy that you don't feel up to it.

It is recommended that if you have had early pregnancy bleeding, or have experienced previous early miscarriages, that you speak to your doctor about your sexual activity through the early stages of your pregnancy. If you start to experience any bleeding it is worthwhile stopping sexual activity as this can make the bleeding worse.

Travel during pregnancy

If you are planning on travelling while you are pregnant, either by air, or in the car for long distances (greater than 4 hours at a stretch), it is recommended you wear DVT stockings, do regular calf exercises and where possible stop for breaks, or move around the cabin every two hours. You should also have an adequate intake of fluids and avoid alcohol or caffeine.

If you are travelling by car, it is important that you continue to wear a seat belt. Worn properly, a seat belt can protect both you and your baby if there is an accident. Fasten the belt buckle over your hips, with the lap section as low as possible, under the bulge of your abdomen. While air travel for pregnant women is safe, the best time to travel is generally the second trimester. Most airlines permit pregnant women to fly until the end of the 32nd week of pregnancy for international travel and 36 weeks for domestic travel.

Speak with your fertility specialist about any travel plans, particularly if these are within the first trimester of your pregnancy.

A basic guide to nutritious foods to include in your diet

Carbohydrates	<p>breads, cereals and pasta (try to eat wholegrain) fruit vegetables</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Gives you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - energy - B vitamins (only wholegrains) - fibre
Protein	<p>fish (not raw) eggs nuts poultry</p> <p>legumes lean red meat milk and milk products</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Important for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - red blood cells - energy production ◆ Helps build: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - muscle - enzymes - hormones - antibodies - iron
Calcium	<p>milk yoghurt sardines tofu almonds</p> <p>cheese dark green leafy vegetables canned salmon (with bones) broccoli blackstrap molasses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Important for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - strong bones and teeth
Vitamin C rich fruits and vegetables	<p>citrus fruits tomatoes peppers broccoli papaya kiwi fruit capsicum cauliflower</p> <p>berries oranges cabbage guava strawberries rockmelon brussels sprouts peas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Important for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fibre and energy - fights infection - heals wounds - absorbs iron
Folate rich foods	<p>dark green leafy vegetables spinach brussel sprouts soy beans root vegetables wheat germ kidney beans salmon avocado</p> <p>asparagus lima beans brewer's yeast whole grains bulghur wheat white beans oranges milk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Builds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - neural tube development - healthy blood cells to carry oxygen to all tissues including the placenta
Iron rich foods	<p>meat poultry cherry juice dried fruit</p> <p>fish eggs blackstrap molasses green leafy vegetables</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Important for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - strong blood and energy
Zinc rich foods	<p>pumpkin seeds seafood turkey brewer's yeast eggs</p> <p>sunflower seeds meat mushrooms soy beans wheat germ</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Builds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reproductive function - metabolism - immunity

The use of vitamins in pregnancy

A healthy diet is important however there are additional vitamins that are important in the lead up to and throughout your pregnancy. Folic acid, iodine and iron are the most important of these and we strongly recommend that all pregnant women take adequate supplements of all of these.

Folic acid	The most important vitamin is folic acid, which is a B group vitamin that is needed for healthy growth and development. Women who are planning to conceive should be taking folic acid at least one month before pregnancy and for the first three months of pregnancy. This will substantially reduce the risk of neural tube defects such as spina bifida in their babies. A minimum of 400mcg/daily is recommended for women who are pregnant or planning pregnancy.
Iodine	Iodine is important for the normal functioning of the thyroid gland. Thyroid hormones are important for the normal development of the skeletal, muscular and nervous systems of children and play an important role in the normal development of brain, eyesight and hearing. 150mcg/day of supplemental iodine is recommended for women who are pregnant or planning pregnancy.
Iron	Once you are pregnant, anaemia is very common. Iron prevents anaemia and all pregnant women should take adequate iron supplements.

While **folic acid**, iron and **iodine** are clearly important in pregnancy, the role of other vitamin supplements is much less clear. Some manufacturers offer multi-vitamin supplements that have been tailored for pregnancy. These are however, very expensive and may not be worth the additional expense.

Vitamin D	This is involved in building and maintaining healthy bones and muscles, and promotes calcium absorption for healthy bones. The body creates vitamin D from sun exposure – supplementation may be necessary.
Zinc	This is thought to boost the immune system. Zinc also assists in energy production, is essential in DNA synthesis, aids digestion of carbohydrates and absorption of vitamins, and assists in wound healing. It is necessary for normal growth and development and deficiency can cause dwarfism and mental defects.
Calcium	This is especially important to the development of bones, soft tissues and blood of the body.

Things to avoid during pregnancy

Foods

The greatest diet related risk to pregnant women is listeria, which is a bacteria caused by eating food contaminated by listeria bacteria. You should try to avoid the following foods, which have been known to harbour listeria and/or salmonella, and which can cause harm to a developing fetus. Pregnant women are at a higher risk of infection because of their reduced immunity.

Herbs

Echinacea isn't recommended during pregnancy because it could stimulate your uterus and cause premature labor.

Vitamins

Vitamin A is involved in creating DNA and in small amounts, is essential for healthy fetal development, in particular the immune system and eyes. However vitamin A should be avoided in the first trimester as it can be stored by the body and has been linked to birth defects.

Alcohol

The NHMRC recommends no more than two standard drinks per day for women and four for men with at least two alcohol-free days per week, and considers abstinence to be desirable during pregnancy. While it is not possible to set 'safe' limits, it is known that higher intakes of alcohol can be harmful.

Smoking and recreational drugs

Smoking cigarettes or using recreational drugs in both men and women, can be harmful to your developing baby, and you should cease both of these activities. Active and passive smoking not only harms sexual and reproductive health throughout both men and women's reproductive life, it also compromises the health of the unborn fetus. According to research, a child born to a male smoker is 4 times more likely to develop cancer in childhood.

Spray tans

Spray tans are not recommended during pregnancy as they may contain chemicals that can be harmful to the baby. Remember that your skin can become more sensitive in pregnancy due to hormone level changes so if you are in the sun you will need to use sun protection.

Foods to avoid include:

- ◆ Raw eggs
 - ◆ Soft cheese (camembert, brie) which are normally made with unpasteurised milk. Ensure any soft cheese you eat has a label clearly stating that it's made from pasteurised milk. *Cottage cheese, ricotta, cream cheese, processed cheeses (such as American) and hard cheeses (such as cheddar and parmesan) as well as cultured dairy products like yoghurt and buttermilk are considered to be safe.*
 - ◆ Pre-packaged salads or sandwiches
 - ◆ Sliced meats or chopped chicken, pâté
 - ◆ Raw meat
 - ◆ Raw fish and other seafood, including oysters
 - ◆ Soft serve ice cream or soft serve yoghurt
 - ◆ Sushi
 - ◆ Sugar intake
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Other tips to avoid listeria bacteria in foods:

- ◆ Cook food thoroughly
 - ◆ Reheat foods to 'steaming hot'
 - ◆ Avoid foods that are past their 'best before' or 'use by' date
 - ◆ Only buy ready-to-eat hot food if it's steaming hot
 - ◆ Do not eat unsealed food that has been in the refrigerator more than three days as listeria grows well at fridge temperature
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Other things to avoid:

- ◆ Contact with soiled cat litter or faeces – can cause problems like miscarriages (toxoplasmosis)
 - ◆ Exposure to chemicals
 - ◆ Avoid using paint with high lead levels
 - ◆ Avoid spraying pesticides and weed killing
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Referral to an Obstetrician

What to expect in the next 9 weeks of your pregnancy

Week	Symptom	Cause
Week 4	Pregnancy blood test at TasIVF	Besides a missed period, many women do not even realise they are pregnant at this stage.
Week 5	Dizziness / Fainting	Traditionally an anecdotal way of diagnosing pregnancy. Usually caused by the progesterone lowering a woman's blood pressure in the early part of the pregnancy but the dizziness may continue throughout pregnancy.
	Breast tenderness	Caused by milk ducts growing and maturing, and increased blood supply.
	Morning sickness	Caused by the high levels of oestrogen and progesterone in the body. Starts between 5 and 6 weeks, but usually improves by 12 to 14 weeks of the pregnancy. 15% of women are lucky and don't get these symptoms. Symptoms are worse with multiple pregnancies.
	Constipation	Caused by the increased level of the progesterone, which relaxes muscles in the intestine.
Week 6	Fatigue	Caused by the metabolic changes in the body that are necessary to grow the baby. Normally improves by week 12 to 14.
Week 7-8	Urinary frequency increased	Caused by increased blood flow to the woman's kidneys, which causes an increase in urine soon after conception. Peaks by about 9 to 16 weeks of the pregnancy, then settles.
Week 9	Hot flushes	Caused by the increased blood flow around woman's body, causing the body temperature to rise. May cause increased sweating (particularly hands and feet).
Week 12	The embryo is now called a fetus. It is about 5cm long, from its head to its bottom, or about the size of your little finger. It has a nose and a neck, and all of its organs and parts have been formed, including ovaries or testicles. From now on, the fetus grows and matures.	

Care advice

A blood test is more accurate than a urine test.

- Try:
- ◆ getting up slowly
 - ◆ avoiding standing in the one spot for a long period of time
 - ◆ avoiding hot environments
 - ◆ sitting if you feel faint
 - ◆ drinking plenty of fluids
 - ◆ eating regularly
 - ◆ eating one hour prior to exercise and drinking plenty of water

- Try: ◆ Wearing a support bra

- Try:
- ◆ eating a dried biscuit or toast before getting out of bed. This can increase your blood sugar level
 - ◆ eating frequent small meals rather than three main meals a day
 - ◆ eating ginger, however this can take around three weeks to take effect
 - ◆ seasickness acupressure bands
 - ◆ vitamin B supplements
 - ◆ separating your food and drinks at meals.

If your symptoms are persistent & severe, seek medical advice. There are a number of anti-nausea medications that are quite safe for use in early pregnancy.

- Try to:
- ◆ increase fibre
 - ◆ increase water intake
 - ◆ eat fresh fruit and vegetables
 - ◆ drink fruit juice

- Try to:
- ◆ exercise regularly
 - ◆ get lots of sleep

- Try to:
- ◆ avoid large volumes of fluid before going to bed.
 - ◆ check midstream urine

- Try to:
- ◆ get lots of rest
 - ◆ wear light cotton clothing

Weeks 6-12 Miscarriage risk

Throughout weeks 6 to 12 there is a risk of miscarriage. When we find a heartbeat on scan at 6 to 7 weeks, there is a 90% chance of a baby at the end of the pregnancy. By 12 weeks, the odds are up to 99.9%. Therefore, there's a 10% chance of losing a baby after scanning a heartbeat at 6 weeks. If this sadly happens, nothing you have done will have contributed to the miscarriage. The majority of such losses are related to abnormalities in the formation of the fetus, either genetic mistakes or structural problems. Unfortunately there is nothing that can be done to stop the miscarriage process once started. If it is a recurring problem, further investigations are useful and treatment may be possible.

Now that you are pregnant, the next important decision you will face is the kind of obstetric care and delivery you would like. You may already have an obstetrician, however if you would like your fertility specialist to give you a referral, this can be organised at your 6 week scan or you can call us to have one sent to you. Alternatively you can ask your GP for a referral, which will be valid for 12 months.

You should begin to consider as soon as possible:

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- ◆ the type of care you would like (private or public)
 - ◆ making an appointment with your obstetrician (it is recommended you see your obstetrician by around week 10 or 11 of your pregnancy)
 - ◆ booking into the hospital of your choice (this may depend on where your obstetrician delivers).
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If you want to deliver at a private hospital, you need to book in as soon as possible. In order to do this, you need to ring the hospital of your choice. They will normally ask you for your expected delivery date, or date of your last menstrual period, which the IVFAustralia nurses will have already provided you with.

Early screening tests

Prenatal screening tests are normally performed by an obstetrician and aim to identify whether a baby is at an increased risk of having a particular problem (not whether the baby definitely has a problem). For your convenience IVFAustralia's specialist diagnostic ultrasound partner, O&G Imaging Australia, is located in our City Clinic, Level 1, 33 York St, Sydney.

All pregnant women regardless of their age or family health history may choose to have one of these prenatal screening tests. Prenatal screening tests include:

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- ◆ Chorionic villus sampling (usually simply called CVS) at 11-13 weeks
 - ◆ Nuchal translucency ultrasound test at 11-14 weeks
 - ◆ Maternal serum blood test at 15-18 weeks
 - ◆ Fetal anomaly ultrasound scan at around week 18
 - ◆ Amniocentesis at 15-19 weeks
 - ◆ Cordocentesis at 18-20 weeks
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For further information about each of these tests, as well as further diagnostic testing, you can either speak with IVFAustralia's genetic counsellor, your obstetrician or visit genetics.com.au

Maternity Hospital contact details

NORTHERN SYDNEY	
North Shore Private Hospital	Westbourne Street, St Leonards Phone: (02) 8425 3000 www.northshoreprivate.com.au
Royal North Shore Hospital	Reserve Road, St Leonards Phone: (02) 9926 7111 www.nscchealth.nsw.gov.au
The Mater Hospital	Rocklands Road, North Sydney Phone: (02) 9900 7300 www.matersydney.com.au
The Sydney Adventist Hospital	185 Fox Valley Road, Wahroonga Phone: (02) 9487 9111 www.sah.org.au
Hornsby & Ku-ring-gai Hospital	Palmerston Road, Hornsby Phone: (02) 9976 9611 www.nscchealth.nsw.gov.au/services/hornsby
Manly Hospital	Darley Road, Manly Phone: (02) 9477 9123 www.nscchealth.nsw.gov.au
North Gosford Private Hospital	Burrabil Ave, North Gosford Phone: (02) 4324 7111

SOUTHERN SYDNEY	
St George Private Hospital	1 South Street, Kogarah Phone: (02) 9598 5555 www.stgeorgeprivate.com.au
Kareena Private Hospital	86 Kareena Rd, Caringbah Phone: (02) 9717 0000 www.kareenaprivate.com.au
Hurstville Community Hospital	37 Gloucester Road, Hurstville Phone: (02) 9570 5777
Sutherland Hospital	Cnr Kingsway & Kareena Road, Caringbah Phone: (02) 9540 7111 www.sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au
Wollongong Hospital	Loftus Street, Wollongong Phone: (02) 4222 5000 www.sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au/

WESTERN SYDNEY

Royal Prince Alfred Hospital	Missenden Road, Camperdown Phone: (02) 9515 6111 www.cs.nsw.gov.au/rpa/
Canterbury Hospital	Canterbury Road, Campsie Phone: (02) 9787 0000 www.cs.nsw.gov.au/Canterbury
Westmead Private Hospital	Cnr Mons & Darcy Roads, Westmead Phone: (02) 8837 9000 www.ramsayhealth.com.au/wmp/
Westmead Public Hospital	Cnr Hawkesbury & Darcy Roads, Westmead Phone: (02) 9845 5555 www.swahs.health.nsw.gov.au/westmead
Auburn Hospital	Norval St, Auburn Phone: (02) 9563 9500 www.swahs.health.nsw.gov.au/auburn
Blacktown Hospital	Blacktown Road, Blacktown Phone: (02) 9881 8000 www.swahs.health.nsw.gov.au/blacktown
Blue Mountains District ANZAC Memorial Hospital	Great Western Highway, Katoomba Phone: (02) 4784 6500 www.swahs.health.nsw.gov.au/bluemountains

EASTERN SYDNEY

Royal Hospital for Women	Barker Street, Randwick Phone: (02) 9382 6111 www.sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au/rhw/
Prince of Wales Private Hospital	Level 5, Barker Street, Randwick Phone: (02) 9650 4000 www.healthscopehospitals.com.au



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