



Embryo transfer

A fresh embryo or blastocyst transfer may be carried out two to six days after egg collection. The embryologist will confirm the time and date, the day after egg collection at the time of the fertilisation results. Embryo transfer is usually a quick and painless procedure, much like a smear test, and without the need for pain relief or sedation.

Have a shower before transfer but do not wear any perfume, aftershave, hairspray or strong deodorant on the day. These products may be used again once the embryos have been transferred and the patient has left the clinic.

During embryo transfer:

- an external abdominal ultrasound scan during the procedure assists with the accuracy of the transfer of the embryo/s. For this to be effective, the patient must have a semi-full bladder so should avoid passing urine immediately before the procedure
- a small flexible catheter is used to transfer the embryos via the cervix and into the uterus
- the patient can empty her bladder immediately after embryo transfer
- the patient need not be accompanied by her partner during the embryo transfer procedure and may drive immediately afterwards

'Dos and don'ts' during the '2 week wait'

Following embryo transfer:

- the woman should carry on as normal providing she feels well
- she may have a shower later that day
- she can return to work and may continue with gentle exercise
- she should eat a light diet and drink plenty of fluids (water and juice)
- she may resume sexual intercourse from five days after transfer, if she wishes, as this will not harm the embryos or affect the chances of a pregnancy
- she should not bath for seven days
- she should not use a hot water bottle - or similar - on her abdomen for two weeks
- she should not swim or use Jacuzzis or saunas for two weeks

What happens after embryo transfer?

Ten to 14 days after embryo transfer the patient/s will know whether treatment has been successful. Many patients find this time one of the hardest parts of treatment and very little can be done to improve the chance of success at this stage. **Do not test earlier than the day advised by the MFS clinical team.**

Some women may begin their period before the end of the 10-day/14 day wait. Unfortunately this is usually a sign that treatment has not worked. But it is still necessary to do a pregnancy test, particularly if the bleeding is not like her normal period and especially if more than one embryo or blastocyst was transferred.

A patient should call the clinical team if she has any worries following her embryo or blastocyst transfer.

Fertility drugs

Fertility drugs are given to increase the level of progesterone in the woman's blood (luteal support), to help the uterine lining stay healthy and to give the embryo(s) a better chance of implanting.

As the level of progesterone increases, the woman may experience one or more possible side effects, including:

- breast tenderness
- feeling bloated
- changes in appetite

These symptoms are also common in early pregnancy, making it difficult to tell whether the treatment has worked or whether she is just experiencing the normal effects of the drugs.

Concerns

If the woman has a headache or mild abdominal pain, she may take paracetamol (up to eight tablets in 24 hours). She may experience some spotting any time after embryo transfer, though this is fairly common. If any of these continue for more than 24 hours, she should call MFS for further advice, and also if:

- she feels breathless
- she is drinking but not passing urine
- she feels she is becoming more bloated

These could be signs that she is at risk of developing OHSS (see 'Ovarian Hyperstimulation Syndrome' infosheet) which can be serious.

Pregnancy test

Pregnancy testing should be done only on the date advised by MFS and may be done either at home or at MFS, via an appointment.

MFS can supply a pregnancy test kit as some people prefer to do their test at home. If a patient is not sure about the result, she may call the unit for advice from a nurse or doctor. Follow the instructions on home-test kit, but do not be tempted to test early as the result may be inaccurate. Whatever the result, contact MFS to let the clinical team know the outcome of the treatment.

Alternatively, MFS can perform a sensitive pregnancy test two weeks after embryo transfer or 10 days after a blastocyst transfer. The test is simple to do and the result is available straight away. A patient may either book the test before she leaves the unit after her embryo transfer or phone and book at a later date. She should bring a small sample of urine, from the first she passed that day. Alternatively she may post a urine sample to MFS in a container clearly labelled with her:

- name
- MFS patient reference number
- contact telephone number
- date of birth

The container **MUST** be sent in a padded envelope.

Keep MFS informed

Whatever the outcome, MFS needs to know the result of the pregnancy test, so staff can advise the patient of what she should do next.

The clinic is also legally required to inform the HFEA about the outcome of all treatment cycles.

Whatever the outcome, the patient may want to come in to the unit to speak to a member of staff before considering what to do next. Some people prefer to wait before coming back, while others want to discuss their options as soon as possible, so the timing of the follow-up appointment is entirely up to the patient.

Contacting MFS

Call 01922 455911:

- to speak to a nurse or doctor between 7.30am - 6.30pm Monday to Friday, (calls after 5.00pm will be answered the next day unless it is urgent) or 8.00am - 1.00pm at weekends
- for the out of hours emergency service after these times **for any medical problems**

Alternatively, for non-urgent enquiries, email:

- thenurses@midlandfertility.com for the clinical team
- thelab@midlandfertility.com for the laboratory team

What is included in the cost?

The cost of embryo transfer is included in the published charge for IVF and ICSI treatment cycles or for frozen embryo transfer.

Costs

Please refer to the current List of Charges in either the Patient Finance Information leaflet or via midlandfertility.com/fees.

Success rates

Please refer to midlandfertility.com/success-rates for details of the most recent published results.

Further information

Please visit midlandfertility.com and search for 'Treatments' or read the following MFS infosheets:

- Counselling
- Embryo Freezing
- Frozen Embryo Transfer
- Ectopic Pregnancy

(downloadable from midlandfertility.com by searching for 'MFS Treatment Literature', or in hardcopy from MFS).