

Fertility Treatment: Medication

Factsheet by  HEART

Purpose

Regulate or stimulate ovulation, often used when ovulation disorders lead to infertility. Can also be used for women who ovulate regularly but cannot conceive by stimulating extra/better eggs

Function

Stimulate the ovaries: increase the amount of follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) or the luteinizing hormone (LH), Prevent premature ovulation (often used for IVF), Cause ovulation to occur (for optimal timing to inseminate), and Promote implantation on the uterine lining and increase the hormone progesterone

Costs

Relatively inexpensive compared with other treatments- Oral medications are often paired with IUI and regular ultrasounds to total to range from \$500 and \$1000 a month for a single cycle (on its own, meds cost about \$10-\$100 month). If injecting hormones through shots (paired with IUI and ultrasounds), can cost about \$3,500 a month

Considerations

Drugs can pose a risk of twin pregnancies and higher-order multiple pregnancies, especially with injectable medications. With drugs that induce ovulation, there is a risk for ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome (OHSS) where ovaries get swollen and painful. A few studies suggest that women taking fertility drugs for 12 months or more and who do not have a successful pregnancy might be at an increased risk of ovarian tumors later in life.

Fertility Treatment: Surgery

Factsheet by  HEART

Purpose

For structural problems that can be treated surgically to increase the chances of conception, surgery might be the best option. Surgery can be used for the removal of uterine fibroids, polyps, pelvic adhesions, and endometriosis tissue.

Function

Laparoscopy is a minimally invasive surgery that can be useful for the diagnosis and treatment/removal of diseases and abnormalities of the abdomen and pelvis. A hysteroscopy is used to look within the uterine cavity and may be performed in conjunction with a laparoscopy. These two procedures allow for physicians to see the exterior of the fallopian tubes, but blockages or disease of the interior of the fallopian tubes (known as the tubal mucosa) must be viewed with special instruments during procedures such as a Salpingoscopy and Falloposcopy.

Costs

The cost of surgery for fertility can range from \$2,000 to \$10,000, depending on a variety of factors:

- 1) what your insurance covers
- 2) the hospital you go to
- 3) whether the hospital and doctors are in- or out-of-network
- 4) the type of anesthesia used

Considerations

Patients must consider whether the surgery will be minimally invasive or "open." With minimally invasive fertility surgery, you can expect less pain and recovery time than traditional 'open' surgery.

Fertility Treatment: Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART)- IVF

Factsheet by  HEART

Purpose

In Vitro Fertilization: To combine the egg and sperm outside of the body (in vitro) and then implant that embryo in the uterine lining. Medications are needed to control hormones and ovulation and minor surgical procedures are used to retrieve and implant the egg.

Function

Medications are taken for several months to mature eggs. Then, matured eggs are removed from the body with a narrow tube and mixed with sperm to form an embryo. After 3-5 days, a physician will put 1 or more fertilized eggs or embryos into your uterus. Pregnancy occurs if those embryos implant in the lining of your uterus.

Costs

Health insurance only covers some of the costs of IVF if patients meet certain requirements and IVF can be very costly. One cycle can cost up to \$15,000 and the national average is \$11,500.

IVF can be time-consuming, expensive, and invasive. Both partners as well as the person who is performing the procedure may suffer from depression or anxiety during the process. This is common alongside feeling overwhelmed or discouraged. IVF may take several months to complete, and oftentimes more than one round may be necessary for pregnancy. However, everybody is different and it might not work/work differently for everyone dependent on age and the cause of infertility.

Fertility Treatment: Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART)- IUI

Factsheet by  HEART

Purpose

IUI, also known as intrauterine insemination or artificial insemination, can be used to increase the number of sperm that reach the fallopian tubes and subsequently increase the chance of fertilization.

Function

The most motile sperm are separated and washed of any chemicals. A physician uses a soft catheter that is moved into a woman's uterus to deposit the semen at the time of ovulation. Sperm should then swim into the fallopian tube and fertilize a waiting egg, resulting in a normal pregnancy. This can be coordinated with your normal cycle or with fertility medications.

Costs

Depending on insurance coverage and specific fees, IUI usually costs about \$300-\$4,000 (less expensive than IVF) without insurance. The type of medication, pricing for monitoring & bloodwork, and cost of insemination (injecting sperm into the uterus) are all factors that may change the cost of IUI.

Considerations

IUI is not recommended for women who have severe disease of the fallopian tubes, have a history of pelvic infections, or anyone who has moderate to severe endometriosis. The procedure may result in infection, spotting (small amounts of vaginal bleeding), and an increased risk of a multiple pregnancy (twins, or more which may result in early labor and low birth weight).

Fertility Treatment: Egg Freezing

Factsheet by  HEART

Purpose

- In the situation that an individual with ovaries gets a serious disease, such as cancer, or plans to have children at an older age, they can harvest and freeze their eggs to use later when they are ready to have children.
- The main purpose of egg freezing is to ensure there are lower chances of serious complications if they choose to have a child in the future.

Function

The official medical name for egg freezing is mature oocyte cryopreservation. Egg freezing is a procedure that involves stimulating the ovaries with hormones to produce several eggs, retrieving the eggs, and cooling them to subzero temperatures at a lab. They can be safely thawed when you are ready to use them.

Costs

- The average cost of egg freezing ranges from \$30,000 - \$40,000, due to the combination of treatment and storage.
- Based on the amount of cycles the person is extracting eggs, the cost of treatment, the cost of medication, and storage goes up.

Considerations

- Consider what you expect your life timeline might be, such as an ideal age you plan to have children or making a financial plan to secure the future of your family.
- The cost of egg freezing is definitely out of range for many individuals, couples, and families, so consider income, family planning, savings, and the reality of the situation.
- People under 38-40 are usually given the option to freeze their eggs, since it is typically harder to have children past the age of 40.