kindbody

In vitro fertilization:

step-by-step.



An IVF cycle includes a fertility assessment, semen preparation, ovarian stimulation monitoring, egg retrieval procedure, fertilization and culture of the eggs, and embryo transfer procedure. A cycle takes about one month from the day you start medication to your pregnancy test. It's important to note that more than one cycle may be needed to achieve a successful pregnancy.

Step 1: **Fertility assessment**
A fertility assessment is the first step of the IVF process, and a way to learn more about your fertility. It includes a blood test for fertility hormones, a vaginal ultrasound of your ovaries, a medical history review, and a 1:1 consultation with a fertility specialist. Once your provider has your results, they will recommend a stimulation protocol and IVF cycle plan that works for you. Note that a few more tests may be issued before beginning the stimulation process.

Step 2: **IVF cycle prep**
After your provider reviews all of your results, they will teach you how to administer the at-home hormone injections involved in the stimulation process. They also work to track your period so that the timing for your IVF cycle is right. On days 2–4 of your next period, you will begin taking medications to stimulate your ovaries so they can produce more eggs for the retrieval.

Step 3: **Stimulation process**
You'll be giving yourself small at-home hormone injections to stimulate your ovaries, so they can grow more eggs for the retrieval. Throughout the stimulation process - usually 10-14 days - you'll come in every few days for scans and blood tests to monitor your response to the drugs and adjust your dosage as necessary.

When your hormones and follicles are at the right levels, you'll be instructed to take a trigger injection, which allows your eggs to complete maturation and start the ovulation process. This happens about 36 hours before your egg retrieval.

Step 4: **Egg retrieval and sperm collection**
You'll be sedated for 10-15 minutes, while a physician collects your eggs. You may be a little sore afterward, but the majority of women resume normal activities the next day. Typically, if one is using their male partner as the sperm source, a semen sample is collected on the same day as your egg retrieval. After the egg retrieval and sperm collection, an embryologist will place the eggs and sperm into an incubator to fertilize. Any resulting embryos are left to develop for 3-5 days and are closely monitored for quality.

Step 5: **Embryo transfer**
Around 3-5 days after your retrieval, the highest quality embryo is transferred back into your uterus. You do not need to be sedated for the transfer - it only takes a few minutes and there is typically minimal, if any, discomfort. Any high-quality embryos not transferred can be frozen for future use. Note that if additional genetic screening is recommended on your embryos, you may need to wait up to one month between the retrieval and transfer.

Step 6: **Pregnancy test**
About 9-11 days after the transfer, you'll take a blood pregnancy test to see if the embryo is developing into a fetus. We will guide you through the next steps and arrange for the appropriate support.