



Clomiphene and Intrauterine Insemination

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What is clomiphene?

Clomiphene (also called Serophene or Clomid) is an oral fertility medication which is used to increase the number of eggs which are released at the time of ovulation.

What is intrauterine insemination?

Intrauterine insemination (or "IUI") is a fertility procedure in which the male partner gives a sperm sample which is then prepared by the lab to concentrate the best quality sperm into a small droplet.

If donor sperm is being used, the frozen droplet is thawed and "washed," or rinsed of the chemicals that protect it during the freezing process.

The droplet is then placed directly in the uterus. This reduces the distance that the sperm needs to swim to get to the egg.

Why is clomiphene with IUI used?

This treatment is used in unexplained infertility, mild endometriosis or mild male factor infertility. The goal of this treatment is to increase the monthly chance of getting pregnant by increasing the number of eggs produced and by placing the sperm closer to the egg.

This is a starting point for treatment for many couples, as it is relatively inexpensive and non-invasive in comparison with other fertility treatments.

What are the chances of getting pregnancy with clomiphene and IUI?

The chance of getting pregnancy with this treatment depends mainly on two factors: the woman's age and the number of cycles of treatment. The chance of pregnancy is best in women under 35. The chance of pregnancy is also best in the first 3–4 cycles of treatment. After that pregnancy rates are very low, and therefore more cycles are not usually advised.

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Age	Pregnancy rate per cycle	Pregnancy rate after up to 3 cycles
<35	11.5%	24.2%
35-37	9.2%	18.5%
38-40	7.3%	15.1%
41-42	4.3%	7.4%
>43	1.0%	1.8%

What are the side effects of clomiphene?

- Clomiphene is generally well tolerated. Common side effects include bloating or pelvic discomfort from enlargement of the ovaries. Some women also experience breast tenderness, nausea, or hot flashes. A small proportion of women experience visual symptoms such as blurring, spots, lights or trailing images. If this occurs, you should stop the medication and notify your doctor.
- Clomiphene can also cause a temporary thinning of the lining of the uterus. If this occurs, the medication must also be stopped.
- Clomiphene does not increase the risk of miscarriage or birth defects.
- Prolonged use of clomiphene may increase the risk of ovarian tumors, and therefore its use is limited to 12 cycles in a woman's lifetime.

Is there a risk of multiple pregnancy with clomiphene and IUI?

Yes - the overall chance of a multiple pregnancy is increased to 8% (compared to 2% in naturally conceived pregnancies). The majority are twins (~7%) but there is a risk of triplets or more (~1%).

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How is a clomiphene and IUI cycle done?

- **Clomiphene** - Clomiphene is taken orally once a day (at approximately the same time each day) from days 5-9 (or day 3-7) of the cycle.
- **Follicle tracking** - On the first day of the cycle, you will contact the Nursing Line to arrange for an ultrasound around day 10 of the cycle to monitor follicle growth. You may require a follow up ultrasound 2-3 days later.
- **Ovulation triggering** - Ovulation is triggered with an injectable medication called hCG 24-36 hours before IUI is scheduled. The nurse will teach you how to prepare and inject this medication.
- **Intrauterine insemination** - The male partner will be required to give a sperm sample. The lab will then prepare it. This may take up to 2 hours. During the IUI procedure, the doctor or nurse will place a speculum in the vagina (like when you have a Pap smear). The sperm droplet is drawn into a very thin catheter with a syringe on the end. The catheter is passed through the cervix and the specimen is gently injected into the uterus. This procedure is relatively painless.

** If ultrasound follicle tracking cannot be arranged, you may be asked to test for the natural ovulation trigger (the "LH surge") at home. This is done with ovulation predictor kits. Testing is done in the morning. When the test is positive, the nurse can be contacted and arrangements made for your IUI the same day or the following day.*

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