



## **PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET**

# **HELP WITH GETTING THROUGH THE TWO-WEEK WAIT FOLLOWING YOUR FERTILITY TREATMENT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The 14–16 day wait following treatment can be a very stressful time. After what may seem like never ending visits to the hospital for blood tests and scans, followed by the anticipation and excitement associated with treatment, you are then suddenly left on your own. Having been so involved in the process so far, it may seem strange that all you can do now is wait for your pregnancy test date. Naturally, this wait can generate anxiety, particularly as you have no control over the outcome, and may wonder 'am I pregnant or not?'

Whilst some degree of anxiety over the next two weeks is probably unavoidable, we have enclosed some suggestions which will hopefully help to minimise stress and ease the pressure of waiting.

### **TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF**

By the time you have completed your treatment you really have done as much as you can possibly do at this stage towards achieving a pregnancy. Perhaps now is the best time to re-focus your time and energy onto yourself and each other and make taking care of yourselves your main priority. Indulge yourselves a little and try to give yourselves a well-earned break. This can be achieved in different ways, depending on the things that you enjoy doing as an individual or couple. Going on a short holiday, to the cinema or to your favourite restaurant are things that might help you to relax. Although it is unlikely that you will be able to avoid thinking about the outcome of treatment, some distractions can be helpful at this time.

If you do start to experience vaginal bleeding and /or abdominal discomfort it does not always mean that your treatment has not worked. You need to continue with the medications provided and carry out your pregnancy test on the date provided by the nursing team.

### **CONTACT WITH OTHERS**

Socialising with friends and family during this time may be a good way of getting the support that you need and/or taking your mind off the wondering/waiting scenario. It may, however, be worth giving some thought to the kind of social situations that you feel would be helpful and those that it may be better to avoid for a while, particularly if treatment is unsuccessful.

### **WORK**

Some people may choose to go back to work once treatment has been completed, whilst others may decide to take time off to rest and unwind. This is a matter of personal choice based on what is best for you and what your workplace is like. The partner who has received the treatment, may find it helpful to take the last two days off, in case a period starts at work, which can be difficult

to cope with. Be aware that, occasionally, a period can start sooner or later than 14 days after the end of treatment.

## EXERCISE AND ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES

Exercise may provide you with a sense of physical and emotional wellbeing and may also be a useful way of reducing the symptoms of stress. Although it is advisable to avoid strenuous exercise at this time, gentle swimming, yoga, and walking can be helpful and restorative. Relaxation tapes, meditation or listening to your favourite music may also help to overcome the physical symptoms of stress. If you use aromatherapy oils, please ensure that you avoid those that are contra-indicated when trying to get pregnant. Please seek the advice of a nurse or doctor if you plan to use acupuncture, reflexology, herbal remedies, or any other form of alternative therapy.

## IF TREATMENT IS UNSUCCESSFUL

This can be a very difficult time, because of the physical and emotional investment in the treatment process in the hope of becoming pregnant with nothing at the end of it. It may be worthwhile taking time to appreciate that you have suffered a loss and, as a consequence, you may be feeling considerably more vulnerable than usual.

Taking care of yourselves is particularly important, as is allowing yourselves time to grieve. Also, be aware that one partner may need more time than the other to come to terms with this particular loss before planning the next course of action.

## WHAT TO DO NEXT

If you are unsure about what to do next and would like to discuss this further, you may contact the reception staff and arrange a follow up appointment with a doctor. For some, this may be the possibility of further treatment and for others, it may be that further treatment is not possible and you might be advised to consider other options. You may also wish to access the Counselling Service for support with this.

## COUNSELLING SERVICE

All patients are eligible to access the confidential counselling service in the Department of Reproductive Medicine. For NHS patients this is free of charge and Fee-Paying patients are eligible for two sessions as part of their treatment cycle. This is available before, during and after your treatment but if you do go on to another private clinic, we would inform you when this would have to end.

## COUNSELLING APPOINTMENTS

If you would like to make an appointment, please contact us on the telephone number listed below or call into reception and speak to a member of staff who would be happy to make an appointment on your behalf. You do not have to explain the reasons why you wish to see a Counsellor.

**We have Face to Face, Telephone and Video appointments available on different days and times of the week from Monday to Friday.**

Please note - If you do not plan to have any further NHS fertility treatment, we can help you to explore the alternative options that may be best suited and available to you. We can also provide you with information about other support organisations that may be able to help.

## CONTACT DETAILS



0161 276 6000 (Option 6)



@mft.nhs.uk



<https://www.mft.nhs.uk/saint-marys/services/gynaecology/reproductive-medicine/>

## INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

### **Fertility Network**

#### **Charity for Fertility Patients providing Support and information**

Support line is 0121 323 5025      email on [support@fertilitynetworkuk.org](mailto:support@fertilitynetworkuk.org).

<https://fertilitynetworkuk.org/>

#### **Men Only Support Group**

<https://fertilitynetworkuk.org/events/men-only-support-group-online-3/>

### **BACP - British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy**

Professional Body and source of counselling support

<https://www.bacp.co.uk>

### **British Infertility Counselling Association – BICA**

Professional Body for Fertility Counsellors with register of Members and useful links for associated organisations

<https://www.bica.net/>