



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **What exactly is intrauterine insemination (IUI)?**

A speculum is used to visualize the cervix and a narrow, flexible catheter is threaded through its opening (cervical os) to the top of the uterus, where the washed sperm is deposited, thereby ensuring that millions of motile sperm can reach the fallopian tube to potentially fertilize an egg.

### **Is intrauterine insemination painful?**

An IUI feels much like a PAP smear. You may experience slight discomfort, and mild cramping is not uncommon, but the insemination should not be painful. We use a gentle technique and we work slowly and patiently with your feedback to make the insemination as comfortable as possible for you.

### **What are my chances of becoming pregnant with intrauterine insemination?**

Statistics demonstrate an approximate conception rate of 8% when one IUI is performed per cycle or 13-16% when two IUIs are performed per cycle. IUI tends to be twice as successful as vaginal self-insemination. For women over the age of 35 using frozen sperm, pregnancy rates are significantly higher when IUI is the method versus self vaginal insemination (TSBC research).

### **I want to use my partner's sperm or sperm from my known donor. Can you inseminate me?**

Yes. You have the option of freezing and quarantining sperm donations through a licensed sperm bank or clinic or inseminating with fresh sperm. There is required testing for your partner or donor in either scenario. If you are using fresh sperm and you wish to waive repeat testing of your donor before each insemination, we can do the sperm wash and IUI at your home.

### **Do I need to order washed specimens from the sperm bank, or will raw ones do?**

It is usually most cost-effective to order washed and IUI-ready specimens. If there are only raw specimens available from your donor, we can wash the specimens at home before the IUI for an extra charge.

### **Should I have my specimens delivered to your office?**

You should either have specimens shipped to your home, or if you are using one of the local sperm banks, pick them up. It's a good idea to make sure you have your specimens a day or two before you expect ovulation, just in case it happens early. If your sperm bank does not have weekend pick-up hours, it's especially important to get your specimens on Friday if you think ovulation might happen over the weekend or on Monday. We strongly recommend retrieving specimens in a nitrogen tank rather than a cooler filled with dry ice unless you are certain you will be using the specimens the same day you pick them up, as a nitrogen tank will preserve the specimens more reliably.

### **Should I thaw the sperm before you come over?**

No, you should wait until we arrive, as there can be unpredictable factors such as traffic delays or previous appointments running long that may cause us to be late for your appointment. If we are running late, we will call to let you know.

### **What do I need to have ready before you arrive for the insemination?**

You should prepare your environment in whatever way makes you most comfortable. Relaxing music, items that symbolize your fertility placed on a bedside table, candles, etc., are common. In general, you will need a firm pillow to place under your bottom, a blanket or towel to drape over your lap and a mirror if you want to look at your cervix. The insemination can be done in your bed, on the couch, or on the floor (we've even done them in boats!). You should have your sperm waiting in its storage receptacle. We will bring all medical supplies with us.

### **Can my partner be involved in the insemination?**

Yes, we love to involve partners to everyone's comfort level. Partners often like to depress the plunger of the syringe to deposit the sperm into the uterus. Please let us know how you would like to participate.

**How do I schedule an insemination appointment?**

Call or email us when your menstrual cycle begins and leave a message with your name, phone number, expected ovulation date, and your insemination plan (how many inseminations, how many hours apart, whether the specimens need to be washed first). We will confirm that you're on our calendar. When you are more certain of your ovulation window (usually 12-36 hours advance notice), you'll contact the midwife-on-call directly by cell phone to schedule your appointment(s).

**How long does an appointment take?**

You should allow at least 1 hour from the time we arrive (1.5 hours if specimens need to be washed first). We will usually complete the insemination within the first half hour, and then you will need to lie down for a half hour before resuming activity.

**What is the best timing for an IUI?**

Timing is a very individual matter, and your best timing may differ from cycle to cycle. Comprehensive fertility charting should guide you well, and our midwives and/or your fertility specialist will be able to assist you with timing questions. You should also honor your intuition – we believe it's a valuable assessment tool.

**I'm using an ovulation predictor kit (OPK). Once it goes positive, when should I plan my insemination?**

Some women are ovulating soon after their surge is detected and others not for 36 hours or more. For best timing, OPK results should be interpreted in conjunction with your other fertility signs. Ask us or your fertility specialist to review your charts if you are unsure. We do advise that you test more than once a day with an OPK when you are approaching your expected ovulation. If you test at least twice a day, you will have a much clearer idea of when the LH surge actually begins and you'll be better able to plan ahead.

**Should I do one or two inseminations per cycle?**

Your plan should be specific to you and your circumstances. However, we do not recommend doing only one insemination per cycle if you are using frozen sperm, since it lives 24 hours or less. We recommend doing at least two inseminations (two vaginal, one vaginal and one IUI, or two IUI) in order to cover the entire ovulation window. We find that women get pregnant faster this way.

**What is a preconception consultation and do I need one?**

If you have not already consulted with an OB/GYN, Reproductive Endocrinologist, Naturopath, Midwife or Acupuncturist you may benefit from doing so. We highly recommend the services of Maia Midwifery and Fertility both for their holistic approach to enhancing fertility and their breadth of knowledge in tracking ovulation. At your initial intake appointment with us we will review all your records, offer appropriate health screening, discuss strategies to optimize your fertility, and assist you in developing an insemination plan.

**Do you prescribe fertility medications or do ultrasounds to monitor cycles?**

No, we do not provide these services. However, we often work with women whose doctor or clinic is prescribing fertility medications and monitoring their cycles with ultrasound, either because they prefer to have their inseminations at home or because their doctor or clinic will only perform one IUI per cycle and they prefer to do two. If you would like to use ultrasound to track ovulation, we can refer you out for that service.

**I plan to have my IUIs at my doctor's office and would like to use your services only if my ovulation happens when their office is closed. Will you accept me as a client?**

Yes! We work with many women who mainly use another provider and use our services in a supplementary fashion. We offer appointments around the clock, seven days a week, including holidays. If you anticipate you may need us one month, just call or email to get yourself on our calendar. If you find you don't need us after all, we'd appreciate an update so we're not waiting to hear from you.

**Do you take insurance?**

We do not contract with any insurance companies. However, we will provide you with a statement of services provided and fees paid at the time of service, which you can submit to your insurance company for reimbursement. Many plans have limited fertility benefits, so check with your insurance company. We can process payments through an HSA credit card.

**What forms of payment do you accept?**

We accept checks, Visa, MasterCard and cash. Payment is due at the time of service.