



**Rhiannon  
Hardingham.**  
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

## Integrative IVF Preparation

# CLINICAL CHEAT SHEET

***This information is taken from our IVF Support Masterclass.***

IVF referrals and treatment cycles are increasing every year, but success rates remain largely unchanged. In fact nearly two thirds of individuals and couples attempting IVF will conclude treatment without a baby to take home.

Evidence-based optimisation strategies, which are most effective when commenced at the pre-treatment stage, should be adopted as often as possible to increase chances of success in every case.

Many factors influencing IVF success heavily depend on the health of the individual and their gametes. Appropriate preconception preparation may significantly influence cycle outcomes.

# Clinical Checklist for IVF Patients

## 1. Appropriate assessment of diet and nutritional status:

- A Mediterranean style diet has been shown to improve IVF outcomes. Education of the individual and adjustment of dietary practices should be considered on a case by case basis.
- Many dietary deficiencies, including vitamin D, zinc, selenium, iron, folate, iodine and vitamin B12 may contribute to poor IVF outcomes. Appropriate pathology assessment and correction should be achieved prior to commencement of treatment.

## 2. Hormonal considerations:

- In female patients endogenous hormones including AMH, oestradiol, progesterone, FSH, LH, prolactin and the androgens have been shown to influence IVF outcomes. In many cases these hormones may be optimised by changes to lifestyle and nutritional factors, as well as appropriate herbal medicine application. Hormones should be assessed and corrected where possible prior to treatment.
- In male patients, testosterone and other hormonal factors that may influence it (LH, oestradiol and prolactin), are directly associated with sperm health and function. With appropriate identification, many of these can often be optimised prior to treatment to assist in sperm quality, and therefore likely pregnancy.
- Thyroid function has been shown to influence IVF outcomes for both male and female patients, and should be assessed and corrected prior to treatment.

## 3. Metabolic assessment:

- Metabolic health in both female and male IVF patients has been shown to influence success rates. Ensuring thorough assessment and correction can improve treatment outcomes.
- Both an elevated and low BMI have been associated with poor IVF outcomes. Appropriate assessment, counselling and adjustment should be considered prior to treatment.

## 4. Environmental exposures:

- Many environmental factors, including endocrine disrupting chemical exposure through diet, cosmetics, cleaning products, and occupational exposure have been shown to directly influence hormones and IVF outcomes.
- A full audit and education around how to make changes where necessary should be considered prior to treatment.

## 5. Lifestyle assessment:

- Factors such as excess alcohol consumption, tobacco smoke exposure and recreational and pharmaceutical drugs, have all been shown to significantly influence IVF outcomes. A full audit and education where required should be considered prior to attempting IVF.
- Sleep quality, stress resilience and physical activity are all associated with fertility treatment outcomes, and should be assessed and addressed as required for the individual, including referrals for sleep studies, appropriate counselling and exercise support as indicated.

## 6. Supplement considerations:

- Various antioxidants and nutritional supplements have been shown to improve IVF outcomes, including ubiquinol, vitamin E, carnitine, B vitamins, iodine, resveratrol, inositol and n-acetyl cysteine (NAC). Prescriptions should be based on thorough individual assessment, indications and requirements.

### Further Support and Patient Education:

Please refer to our evidence-based preconception care book, Create A Fertile Life, available at [www.rhiannonhardingham.com](http://www.rhiannonhardingham.com)

### Practitioner education:

For thorough clinical education regarding evidence-based strategies for successful assessment and management of IVF patients, refer to the IVF Support Masterclass, available at [www.rhiannonhardingham.com](http://www.rhiannonhardingham.com).