

Advantages and Disadvantages of IVF



The procedure of IVF has many **advantages** for a couple with infertility problems, however, like all medical procedures, it also has some **disadvantages**

and risks. Before embarking upon an IVF cycle, it is extremely important that a couple or individual understands what the advantages and disadvantages are and as such, they need to see a fertility specialist who can outline the entire process for

them, so informed decisions can be made.

Advantages Of IVF

a successful pregnancy and a healthy baby born are, of course, the biggest advantages of undertaking an IVF procedure! However, this outcome is not going to

be the same for everyone who goes through IVF.

Unfortunately, IVF is not the answer for everyone.

Another advantage to IVF is that it can be used to help bypass problems with a woman's fallopian tubes. IVF was first pioneered for this

very reason so women who had tubal damage or blockages could still have children of their own.

Confirmation of fertilisation is also an advantage of having IVF treatment. For some people, the cause of their subfertility is labelled as

‘idiopathic’ (a technical term for unknown). In instances such as this, it is possible that there may be a problem with the egg and sperm interacting in the normal way, preventing an embryo from being created. If the sperm and egg do not interact in an IVF cycle and

no embryos are created, this is called a 'failed fertilisation'.

Whilst this is devastating for the couple, it can also provide some answers as to why they have not had success in achieving a pregnancy naturally in the past.

Should a failed fertilisation be the result, then the next step would be for the couple to consider having another IVF cycle, but this time try intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI) as the method of fertilisation. If this treatment fails to produce fertilization, then it is time for

the couple to reassess their options with their fertility specialist. With the advent of IVF using ICSI, men who have had a vasectomy or have a very low sperm count now have the potential father children that are biologically theirs.

IVF can also be used as a treatment option enabling any embryos that are created, to be tested for some abnormalities before they are transferred into the uterus (womb). In some instances, couples can be at risk of having children born with conditions such as

Down's Syndrome or Cystic Fibrosis, and using IVF with preimplantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) or comparative genomic hybridization (CGH), the incidences of these conditions can be reduced.

Disadvantage of IVF

A clear disadvantage with IVF is that success is not guaranteed. In fact, less than 50 percent of all couples starting an IVF cycle will achieve a pregnancy. Of those who do become pregnant, not all of the pregnancies will result in a baby: A little over 25 percent

of IVF cycles started,
resulting in a live birth.

Another disadvantage of IVF
is because the process
involves an operative
procedure, there are the
associated risks of infection,
anaesthetic risks and
haemorrhage. Ovarian

Hyperstimulation

Syndrome(OHSS) is also a risk that is only associated with treatment where the ovaries are stimulated through the use of medications, to make multiple eggs. This of course is what happens in IVF and as such, OHSS is a risk for

patients undergoing this treatment.

Many people would not consider the prospect of multiple pregnancies a disadvantage of IVF.

However, many couples are unaware of the serious nature of the risks of multiple

pregnancy, and the frequency with which these complications can occur. If you transfer more than one embryo, there is a chance that all of the embryos will implant, leading to multiple pregnancies. In Australia, clinics are leading the way in reducing the incidence of

multiple pregnancies as a result of IVF by only transferring a single embryo on the majority of cases.

IVF can also be an expensive medical procedure, and if you have access to Medicare entitlements, some of the

costs of IVF are subsidised,
but there are still out of
pockets expenses that come
with IVF treatment. And
whilst private health
insurance may cover the
hospital admission, the total
out of pocket cost to a
couple depends on each
individual's situation. There

are lower cost options
available for IVF that you
might consider exploring.