

Natural Cycle / Intrauterine Insemination

What to expect

This handout is for patients at the Center for Reproductive Health and Fertility (CRHF). It explains how a fertility treatment called “natural cycle/intrauterine insemination” works.



Scan for a digital copy of this handout.

Who is this treatment for?

This treatment works with your natural fertility cycle. People who might benefit from this treatment include:

- Same-sex couples
- Single patients
- Heterosexual couples that are not able to have sexual intercourse

Treatment Steps

- Some patients have a **pelvic ultrasound** exam in the middle part of the cycle. The ultrasound confirms that a mature *follicle* has formed. The follicle is an egg sac within the ovary that grows and matures before *ovulation* occurs. Ovulation is the release of a mature egg from the ovary.
- Patients who have a pelvic ultrasound may also use an ovulation *trigger injection* (shot) which helps the egg mature and determines the time your intrauterine insemination should occur.
- Some patients use a home ovulation predictor kit (OPK) to time insemination. When using an OPK, you will not need an ultrasound or ovulation trigger injection. You will check an OPK at the same time each day. Most patients begin checking OPKs on the 10th day of their menstrual cycle.
 - We recommend that you test the 2nd time you urinate (pee) before noon.
 - When you get your first positive OPK result, you must call CRHF before noon in order to have an insemination the next day.



Ovulation predictor kits can help you determine the right time for insemination.

The IUI Procedure

Intrauterine insemination places the most *motile* (moving) sperm as close as possible to the egg(s) when fertilization is most likely. This helps increase the chance of pregnancy.

The IUI procedure is relatively simple. It only takes a few minutes once the semen (sperm) sample is ready. The semen sample will be *washed*, which separates the healthy sperm from other fluids. This helps increase the chance of pregnancy.

- You will lie on an examining table
- Your provider will gently insert a speculum into your vagina so they can see your cervix.
- They will insert a thin, flexible catheter (tube) through your cervix and into your uterus. The washed semen sample is slowly injected.
- Usually this procedure is painless, but some patients have mild cramps. You may experience spotting (light bleeding) for 1-2 days after the IUI.

What are the possible risks?

The risks of IUI include:

- **Insemination risks:** Cramping, spotting, or infection (very rarely).
- **Cycle cancellation:** If the follicles don't grow properly or ovulation happens too early, the treatment cycle will be cancelled.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Center for Reproductive Health and Fertility:

Weekdays 8 am – 5 pm:
Call 206.598.4225

After hours, weekends, and holidays: Call 206.598.6190 and ask to page the CRHF provider on call.