

Information about
**Screening Tests
Before Fertility
Treatment**

Assisted Conception Service

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This leaflet will give you more information about the screening tests required before you can start your fertility treatment.

The governing body that regulates Assisted Conception Services (the Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority or HFEA) requires that, to avoid spreading infection in storage containers and during laboratory procedures, all people undertaking fertility treatment must be tested for HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, Gonorrhoea and Chlamydia. This leaflet will give you some information about these diseases and contact details of other agencies for further information.

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)

HIV attacks your immune system eventually stopping it altogether, at which point it becomes difficult to combat serious life threatening infections.

The virus can be spread during unprotected sexual intercourse (including oral and anal sex) with an infected person and by sharing needles to inject illegal drugs. Infected mothers can transmit the virus to their baby before or during childbirth.

Should your screening test show that you are infected with HIV, we will offer you treatment(s) designed to reduce the harmful effects of the virus and encourage you to take precautions to reduce the risks of passing it onto others.

Hepatitis B

Hepatitis B is a virus that can cause inflammation (swelling and tenderness) of the liver. It can take a long time for the symptoms to show.

The virus can be spread during unprotected sexual intercourse with an infected person and by sharing needles to inject illegal drugs. Infected mothers can transmit the virus to their baby during childbirth.

Should your screening test show that you are infected with Hepatitis B, we will offer you treatment(s) designed to reduce the harmful effects of the virus.

Hepatitis C

Hepatitis C is also a virus that can cause serious damage to the liver. It can take a long time for the symptoms to show.

The virus is mainly spread through contact with the blood of an infected person. Rarely, the disease is passed through other body fluids. For example, during unprotected sexual intercourse with an infected person or from an infected mother to her baby before or during childbirth.

Should your screening test show that you are infected with Hepatitis C, we will offer you treatment(s) designed to reduce the harmful effects of the virus.

Gonorrhoea

Gonorrhoea is a bacterial sexually transmitted infection and is passed from one person to another by having sex without a condom. This includes vaginal, anal or oral sex. Anyone who is sexually active can get gonorrhoea regardless of age or gender.

Some people, particularly women, do not have any symptoms.

Men with gonorrhoea may notice green or yellow fluid coming out of the penis and, or a burning sensation when passing urine. There may also be some discomfort or swelling of the testicles.

Around 75% of women do not have any obvious symptoms although some women may notice an increased and, or discoloured discharge from the vagina, pain in the tummy or pain when peeing. Sometimes women can also have bleeding in between periods or after sex.

It is easy to test for Gonorrhoea and women may only need a vaginal swab which they can take themselves.

If you test positive for Gonorrhoea we will offer you treatment with antibiotics. It is easy to treat although some types of antibiotics do not work on some types of Gonorrhoea.

Chlamydia

Chlamydia is one of the most common sexually transmitted bacterial infections and affects both men and women. It often does not cause any obvious symptoms.

The disease can be spread during genital contact or unprotected sexual intercourse (including anal and oral sex) with an infected person or from an infected mother to her baby during childbirth.

Should your screening test show that you are infected with Chlamydia, we will offer you antibiotic treatment to clear it and encourage you to take precautions to reduce the risks of passing it onto others.

Rubella

Rubella (also known as German measles) is an infection caused by the rubella virus. It occurs most commonly in young children, but can affect anyone. Rubella is uncommon in the UK as a result of Rubella immunisation. However, if you are pregnant and catch rubella, it can cause serious damage to your unborn child. It is important that before pregnancy you have a blood test to check if you are immune to rubella. If you have been tested please bring a copy, if possible, of this result with you to your pre screening appointment.

Cervical Screening

All women between the age of 20 and 60 are invited to attend for cervical screening every three years. Cervical screening aims to detect and treat abnormal changes in a woman's cervix (the neck of the womb). If left untreated, this may develop into cervical cancer. It is essential that before starting your treatment you have had a cervical smear test within the previous three years. If possible, please bring a copy of your test result to your pre screening appointment. If you have never had a smear test or it has been more than three years since your last test, please arrange to have this done at your local screening centre.

AMH

AMH, or anti mullerian hormone, is produced in small ovarian follicles. Blood levels of this hormone are measured in an attempt to assess your remaining egg supply or your ovarian reserve. This result will influence the treatment protocol you will have during your treatment cycle. We will take a blood sample to measure this hormone at your pre screening appointment. The result will be available at your next appointment.

General Information

We recommend that you have these tests, but you have the right to refuse any treatment or test you do not want to have. **However we are unable to offer you any infertility treatment until the results of the above tests are known.**

The information you provide, the tests that are performed and the results of those tests remain confidential to you. Only the healthcare workers involved in your care will have access to these results. No one else will be party to your information without your written consent.

From time to time, we may request another sample from you because technical problems with the test(s) have occurred. If this happens a member of the healthcare team will contact you to explain the situation. Please note that a request like this does **not** mean that you are infected with any of the diseases mentioned above.

If your tests show that you are free from infection, we will tell you at your next appointment. Please note that it can take up to 12 weeks after exposure to one of these diseases before it shows up on the tests. Therefore, we may ask you to provide another sample for testing at a later date.

If any of your tests show that you are infected with HIV, Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C, we will tell you as soon as possible. We will invite you to attend the clinic to discuss the options available to you. Unfortunately, in these circumstances we cannot offer you infertility treatment. However, we will provide you with contact details of other Assisted Conception Services that may be able to help.

Who Else Can Offer Advice?

The Brownlee Centre

Provides a comprehensive care and support service for all aspects of HIV and hepatitis infections, including the tests used to detect them.

Telephone number: 0141 211 1089

The Sandyford Initiative

Provides HIV and hepatitis testing, as well as advice and support covering all aspects of reproductive, sexual and emotional health.

Telephone number: 0141 211 8634 (health advisors).

www.sandyford.org

Women's Reproductive Health Service

Provides reproductive, maternity and sexual health care for women with specific needs.

Telephone number: 0141 211 5267

National Sexual Health And Aids Helpline

Provides information on HIV and sexually transmitted diseases.

Telephone number: 0800 56 71 23 or 0800 28 29 30

Family Planning Association Scotland

Provides information about family planning, pregnancy and sexual health. Telephone number: 0845 122 8600

www.fpa.org.uk



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