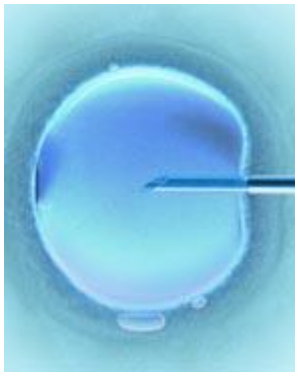
Berkshire Gynaecology

Information for patients

Intra-cytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI)

What is intra-cytoplasmic sperm injection and how does it work?

Intra-cytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI) involves injecting a single sperm directly into an egg in order to fertilise it. It is a process sometimes used during in vitro fertilisation treatment (see IVF patient information leaflet).The fertilised egg (embryo) is then transferred to the woman's womb.



The major development of ICSI means that as long as some sperm can be obtained (even in very low numbers), fertilisation is possible.

ICSI is often recommended if:

- The male partner has a very low sperm count.
- Other problems with the sperm have been identified, such as poor morphology (abnormally shaped) and/or poor motility (poor swimmers).
- At previous attempts at in vitro fertilisation (IVF) there was either failure of fertilisation or an unexpectedly low fertilisation rate.
- The male partner has had a vasectomy and sperm have been collected from the testicles or epididymis (sperm reservoir).
- Other situations where the sperm count is zero and donor insemination is not wanted.
- The male partner does not ejaculate any sperm but sperm have been collected from the testicles.
- The male partner has had problems obtaining an erection and ejaculating. This includes men with spinal cord injuries, diabetes and other disorders.

How does ICSI work?

The procedure for ICSI is similar to that for IVF, but instead of fertilisation taking place in a dish, the embryologist selects sperm from the sample and a single sperm is injected

directly into each egg. After two to three days in the laboratory, those that are fertilised are transferred to your womb in the same way as for conventional IVF.

Reference

This information has been taken from the Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority (HFEA) webpage. For further information go to: www.hfea.gov.uk.

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