



the acupuncture
IVF support clinic

Your Embryo Transfer

All over the world embryos arrive, and survive, in the uteruses of women who are out in the fields tending crops, lifting heavy loads, standing all day at check out counters, enjoying business lunches with wine or jumping on and off bicycles and horses.

But your embryo is slightly different simply because you have put such a lot into getting this far. For this reason, it's worth thinking about treating yourself and your embryo gently for the next couple of weeks.

You've probably heard the analogy of your embryo being like a raspberry seed in a jam sandwich, and yes, its true – it can't fall out! But below are some precautions you might like to think about.

Exercise

Movement is good, but high impact or tiring exercise or strain on the abdomen or lower back is not. Walk, don't run. Be careful with forward bends, sit-ups, back bends or anything that compresses the abdomen or lower back. Don't overheat and don't lift heavy weights. (For swimming see COLD below).

Try not to get overtired, or stand on your feet for long periods.

Bleeding

Some spotting may occur after the transfer procedure, or as a result of medication prescribed at this time. This is usually not of concern but please use pads not tampons.

Cold

In Chinese medicine one of the factors facilitating successful establishment of early pregnancy is a "warm womb". For this reason we advise against swimming, getting chilled around the lower back or abdomen, and the consumption of icy foods and drinks (at least until your pregnancy is well established).

Heat

On the other hand it is important not to get overheated, so don't have very hot showers, baths or saunas. It's best not to put very hot heat packs or hot water bottles on your abdomen. Warm ones are OK, and a good idea if you feel chilled in the abdomen or lower back.

Fumes

Don't wear perfumed skin or hair products when you have your embryo transferred because embryos are particularly sensitive to volatile fumes. It is a good idea to continue this practice for the following couple of weeks and it is especially important to avoid fumes at this time, so please don't plan to repaint or renovate the house just now. Also avoid all fumes like petrol, nail varnish and household cleaning products.

Sex

Most Chinese medicine doctors would caution against sex the first week after a transfer, and for some women, even in the early stages of pregnancy.

Food

Eat nourishing plain foods, choosing fresh foods in season that are pleasing to the palate and the eye, and make sure to maintain good protein intake. Avoid alcohol and minimise coffee intake.

Flying

Some women are nervous of flying after transfer or in early pregnancy. However there is no evidence to date to show any increase in miscarriage or in abnormalities of babies who's mums flew in early pregnancy.

Acupuncture

You may have been having acupuncture to help prepare your uterus before the embryo transfer, and also on the day of transfer to minimise uterine contractions and to aid implantation. We advise one or 2 acupuncture treatments during the 10 -12 days after your transfer, not only to continue to aid implantation but also to keep the mind calm during what can be an anxious time.

Cramping or discomfort in the lower abdomen is not uncommon in the days after transfer and in some women is exacerbated by the progesterone you have been given. Paracetamol or codeine are considered safe to take, but acupuncture will help to relieve this symptom too.