

Cambridge IVF COVID-19 Service Restart Information for Patients

1. What is the current situation?

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) have given Cambridge IVF permission to start offering treatment again following the information given by the government over the last few days. Each treatment centre must demonstrate it has carefully considered and implemented measures to protect patients and staff from unnecessary risk of exposure to COVID-19. Cambridge IVF was one of the first clinics to be granted permission to resume treatment. This means we can now begin to see patients to provide them with fertility treatment services.

2. When can I start treatment?

We are currently working to deploy our detailed service resumption plan. This is dependent on ensuring we have the resources to keep you, our other patients and staff safe and well. Whilst we complete that process we are conducting consultations and information sessions by telephone or video call to ensure we can answer all of your questions and prepare our first patients to move into IVF, ICSI or MACS-ICSI treatment before the end of May for egg collection in mid June. Frozen Embryo transfer and IUI will also be available from mid June onwards.

3. Which treatments are currently available?

We are able to offer you a complete range of treatments ranging from Ovulation Induction and IUI through to IVF, ICSI, MACS ICSI and Frozen Blastocyst Transfer. Our laboratory is operating as it always has; we are fortunate that the design of our cleanroom facility means that within the laboratory where we develop your embryos we have some of the cleanest air in Cambridgeshire.

4. Are diagnostic services available?

We are currently sending out information to people who have been referred for diagnostic semen analysis. The packs will contain a kit for home production of samples and instructions on how to keep the samples safe in transit to either our Cambridge or Ipswich Laboratories. We anticipate being in a position to book appointments with men who have received production kits very shortly. Due to the closure of the service for the last 6 weeks we have accrued a waiting list and ask all patients to be patient as we work to get appointments organised for everyone as soon as we possibly can.

For people seeking our diagnostic 3D ultrasound and HyCoSy testing services will be re-opening in the days to come. For all patients awaiting such testing; be assured that we will be contacting you shortly if we have not already to discuss arrangements for your investigations. Anti Mullarian Hormone (AMH) and other specialist blood testing is currently available via our specialist team.

5. What changes in practice can I expect to see at the centre?

In accordance with national best practice regulations, we are implementing measures to minimise face-to-face contact and promote social distancing. Consultations and in-treatment discussions will be performed by video or

telephone call. All people seeking treatment or diagnostic services will be asked to complete a triage questionnaire, a code of conduct and be temperature tested prior to commencing care. Swab testing will be performed if it is considered necessary on a case-by-case basis. People attending the centre will be asked to wait outside until we are ready to invite them directly in for their appointment. Our staff will be wearing appropriate PPE to protect you, other patients and themselves and you may notice that procedures may take a little longer than they previously did if you have visited us before. In these unprecedented times we will continue to review, improve and develop our care pathways to ensure we deliver to you the highest possible quality of care.

6. What can I do to help keep everyone involved in my care safe?

We will ask you to review your triage questionnaire and agree to temperature and swab testing for COVID-19 at key stages of your treatment journey. In addition we will ask you whilst in treatment to conduct yourself in a manner, which is compliant with the government recommendations at the time with regard to staying alert and ensuring you adhere to social distancing at all times.

7. Can I still have a face-to-face consultation?

We are currently unable to offer face-to-face consultations due to the increased risk this poses to you and to our team. It is only in cases where people present who have special needs which would prevent effective video or telephone consultation. If you feel that your circumstances would make a virtual consultation inappropriate please do contact us at the same time.

8. Do I have to freeze all of my embryos?

You do not. We have since 2018 recommended the consideration of electively freezing any suitable embryos developing to the blastocyst stage on the 5th and 6th day of development in favour of fresh embryo transfer. We do this on the basis that we achieve higher clinical pregnancy rates from this strategy. In some cases elective freeze all may not be appropriate and in such cases we will perform fresh embryo transfer. In some circumstances where you have a medical condition which would increase your risk of severe illness during the COVID-19 pandemic we may advise you to consider elective freeze all and not recommend fresh transfer. If this is the case we will ensure this information is discussed with you along with the reasons behind the recommendation at the very start of your treatment journey during your initial consultation.

9. Can pregnancy be affected by COVID-19?

COVID-19 is so new that data relating to pregnancy is highly limited. We have summarised that information and it is available via our website. We will ensure that you have the time to consider this information before you engage with treatment and have the opportunity to ask any questions you may have. As more information becomes available we will modify or information accordingly and should this result in any changes to the national advice for women who are pregnant whilst you are under our care, we will advise and update you accordingly.

10. What are the advantages of choosing Cambridge IVF as my care provider?

Cambridge IVF is the only NHS provider of fertility treatment in the region. As part of Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust not only do we have access to essential supply chains for personal protective equipment but also a continually reviewed and updated database of processes and procedures relating to COVID-19 and best practice management of patients and pregnancy during these challenging times. Our evidence based approach to service delivery will ensure that you always receive the best and safest standards of care.