

Preparing for fertility treatment

Starting Fertility treatment can bring a range of mixed emotions. It's common to feel a level of anxiety and you may also recognise some excitement or increased hope in that you're working towards your goal of parenthood or growing your family.

It can be helpful to mentally prepare for entering the Fertility treatment pathway. Here are some things that might assist you.

Feel Informed: When it comes to Fertility information, there is copious amounts out there. In fact, it can feel overwhelming! While we encourage you to be well informed about the process, consider where you get your information from. Your medical team and clinic are best placed to provide you with correct medical information and help you to prepare. Check out our "pathways" book on our website and look through the Fertility associate's webpage. One of the challenging aspects of going through fertility treatment is feeling a sense that you don't have control over the process. Being well informed and arming yourself with accurate information helps with this.

Getting to know your team: Treatment is a partnership between you and your clinical team. Take time to get to know your clinics, your doctor, nurses, and counsellors. When you first come into the clinic you might notice you feel apprehensive. Sometimes when we are experiencing intense emotions it affects our ability to retain information. Consider writing down questions prior to appointments and take notes when in the clinic and during conversations if you want to. Don't be afraid to ask questions and get an idea of who you contact at the clinic when you have questions.

Building your support network: Tell others what you want/don't want. Friends and family can be your best support, when they have guidance about what's helpful for you. Decide in advance who you will talk to about your treatment and identify who will give you the support you need. It can be helpful to designate a friend/family member as a "spokesperson" who will let others know, when you are ready, what is going on. In addition, look outside your usual support network to those who truly understand. infertility.. Consider joining a fertility support group through Fertility New Zealand (see link in our support page).

The FA team also form an essential part of your support network. We have many patient resources available to help you mentally prepare for treatment. If you have queries about treatment in general, we offer complimentary nurse chats to talk through concerns you may have. We also provide fertility counselling for individuals and couples, for psychological guidance and care throughout the whole treatment process.



Consider your current coping strategies: You may find that some of your usual go-to self-care and coping strategies are not available to you as a result of going through treatment. So, this might be an opportunity to consider what might help you through this time that is also in line with your treatment pathway. Each person experiences stress in different ways, so it is helpful to identify where yours may come from. For some, it may be in just getting to the clinic in the morning for monitoring, for others it may be injections. Anticipating where your stresses may come from will help in developing and strengthening coping strategies.

A word on Control: Many people will acknowledge that at times through treatment they struggle with a sense of not having control over the outcome. It's difficult to sit with uncertainty about outcomes and not have a guarantee of when or if you might reach your goal of or growing your family. Learning strategies to help manage sitting with uncertainty can help here (see our resources page for ideas) as well as taking time to focus on the other areas of your life, outside of Fertility that you do have a sense of certainty around. Whether this be work, a hobby, your friendships – the things that are stable structures in your life that you can lean on.

Simplify: While it's important to have other focuses in your life outside of Fertility so that it doesn't feel all consuming, it can be helpful to remove unnecessary stressors during treatment to allow you more head space to manage the process. This might simply be giving yourself permission to say "No" to social events that you would rather not attend, or scheduling work project deadlines outside of treatment to give you a little more capacity.

Ask for Help - we are here: Consider booking in with the Fertility counsellor at your clinic. Arranging this first session early on is an opportunity to plan for your future treatment, develop a coping plan with skills to help you along the way and a space to talk through your thoughts and feelings about fertility.



Don't forget to check out our resources on this page, including developing your own treatment wellbeing plan to set you up well for the pathway ahead.

We are here to help.