

The two-week wait

The two-week wait is the time between having your embryos transferred and either starting to menstruate or doing a pregnancy test to find out if you are pregnant. Many women say they find the two week-wait the most difficult part of their treatment as they are always wondering whether they are pregnant and worrying about what they should and shouldn't be doing.

Bed rest

Once you get home, clinics don't usually recommend that you stay in bed to rest as they don't think it increases your chances of success. Several studies have shown that bed rest after embryo transfer doesn't improve pregnancy rates. However, if you feel that resting will be relaxing and help you then you should not feel guilty about doing what is best for you and spending a few days in bed. It may make a difference to how you feel but you can be reassured that there is no evidence that it will have any impact on the outcome if you don't stay in bed resting.

Going back to work

Most clinics will advise that going back to work is your decision. Some women like to take the entire two-week wait off work because they want to relax and they feel that this gives their embryos the best possible chance of implanting. Don't feel worried or guilty if you want to do this too. The two-week wait is a very stressful time, and if taking time off work is going to make it easier for you then do it.

The decision to take time off work may also depend on your job. Some jobs are stressful and demanding and if you think your work is going to cause additional stress for you when you want to feel calm and relaxed you may want to consider taking time off.

To tell or not to tell people

At this stage in treatment, people sometimes regret having told friends or family where they are up to in their IVF cycle. The benefit is that if you tell people you will have someone to talk to during this time, but you should bear in mind that they may not really understand exactly what you are going through which can be frustrating.

Dealing with your emotions

Emotionally, the two-week wait can be the hardest part of treatment and it is common to feel very up and down emotionally during this time. We all have our own ways of dealing with things, so do what is best for you to get through it.

Also be aware that a first IVF cycle is sometimes a fact-finding mission as doctors are not sure how your body will respond to the drugs or whether the sperm will fertilise the eggs. So, getting as far as the two-week wait can be quite an achievement!

Signs of early pregnancy

It can be very tempting to spend the two-week wait analysing every tiny physical sensation to guess if you are pregnant or not. You'll be very aware of if your breasts feel slightly more tender than usual, if you feel nauseous or whether your stomach looks fuller.

However, most signs of pregnancy won't usually appear until after you'd be able to get a positive pregnancy test result. So even if your treatment has been successful, you are unlikely to know for sure during the two-week wait if you are pregnant until you can test. Also, some of the signs of early pregnancy are like pre-menstrual symptoms and experiencing these doesn't mean your treatment hasn't worked.

Counselling and support

At this point you might decide you want some support from a counsellor. Or, you may find that a local support group or an online forum can be helpful during the two-week wait, so that you can talk to and get support from other people who know exactly what you are going through.