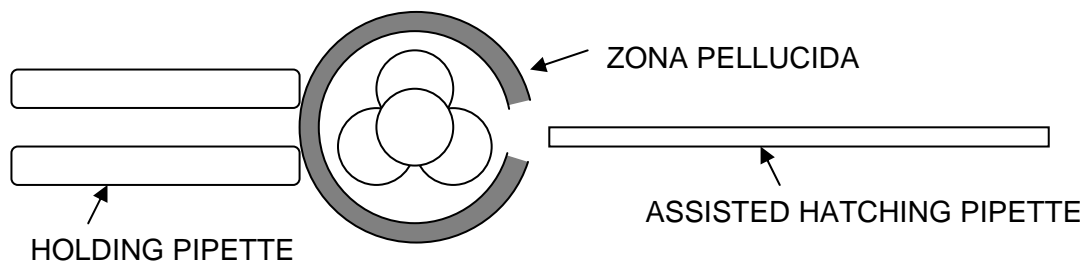




### 1 INFORMATION FOR COUPLES CONSIDERING ASSISTED HATCHING

Prior to implantation within a woman's uterus, an embryo must hatch out of its protective covering, zona pellucida, which forms a tough coating on the outside of the embryo. In implantation, the hatching process is believed to be facilitated by a thin area on the zona pellucida. Some embryos, however, are believed to lack the ability to break free of this coating and therefore fail to implant.

Assisted hatching is a technique in assisted reproduction which may help to overcome this problem. During assisted hatching, the embryologist will use micromanipulation techniques under a microscope to make a small hole in the zona pellucida. This will be done just a few hours prior to embryo transfer and may help the embryo to hatch once transferred to the uterus.



This technique may be of benefit to several categories of patients:

- those who have had repeated unsuccessful IVF/ICSI attempts
- those whose embryos have been identified as having very thick zona pellucidas
- possibly older patients or those with a combination of these factors

Due to the nature of assisted hatching, irretrievable damage may occur to some embryos. Therefore, it may be necessary to attempt assisted hatching on more embryos than required for transfer.

As in the case of any new assisted reproduction technique, the effect on the embryos transferred are unknown though with current knowledge we believe this to be minimal.

If you have any further questions regarding assisted hatching please do not hesitate to ask.