



<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Acrosome	Caplike structure surrounding the anterior half of the head of a head of a sperm
Amenorrhoea	Absence or normal cessation of menstruation for at least six months
Androgens	Male hormones
Andrology	The science of disorders particular to the male reproduction system, for example infertility and sexual dysfunction
Anovulation	Absence in ovulation. Menstrual cycles in which no ovulation occurs are called anovulatory. A woman can still have periods and not be ovulating
Antibody	Defensive protein molecule which detects foreign materials such as bacteria and binds to them, so making them harmless
Artificial Insemination	Procedure which aims at facilitating the encounter of sperm with an egg. Semen is deposited at the entrance of the cervix or directly into the uterus with the help of a catheter. Artificial insemination is practiced with the partner's sperm or donor sperm
Assisted Hatching	A microinjection procedure which chemically dissolves the embryo surface to facilitate implantation
Azoospermia	Absence of sperm in the semen
BBV	Blood borne virus
Bio-Chemical Pregnancy	A positive Hcg level in the blood that fails to continue to rise and does not lead to a clinical pregnancy (normal ongoing pregnancy)
Blastocyst	The early stage of embryonic development during which implantation occurs, approximately eight days after fertilization
BMI	Body Mass Index
Cancelled Cycle	Discontinuation of the cycle due to one of the following: poor response, no oocyte recovery, failed fertilisation or hyperstimulation
Cervical Mucus	Mucus produced by the cervix, which permits passage of sperm to the uterus and fallopian tubes. Their cervical mucus changes in volume and quality at the time of ovulation to enable sperm to reach the fallopian tubes where the egg (oocyte) can be fertilized
Cervix	The lower portion of the uterus which is adjacent to the vagina and serves to act as a reservoir for sperm. The cervix secretes alkaline mucus, which protects sperm from the acid environment of the vagina
Chlamydia	Type of bacteria which frequently attacks the sex organs one of the most common sexually transmitted organisms
Chromosome Anomaly	Any change in the structure or number of any of the chromosomes which can result in anomalies of ranging severity
Clomiphene	A synthetic drug used to stimulate production of FSH and LH. It is usually used to treat women who fail to ovulate regularly
Controlled Ovarian Stimulation	The process of ovulation induction in Assisted Reproduction Technologies in which gonadotrophins are used to stimulate the simultaneous development of several follicles until maturity (15mm to 20mm)
Corpus Luteum	A body which forms from the residues of the follicle following ovulation and produces the female sex hormone progesterone
Cryopreservation	Storage of eggs, semen or embryos at temperatures well below zero in liquid nitrogen
Cyst	A sac with membranous wall, enclosing fluid or semi solid matter can be found on the ovary
DI	Donor insemination using donated sperm
Down-regulation	Reduction of the Follicle Stimulating Hormone and Luteinising Hormone secretion from the pituitary gland by using a GnRH agonist or antagonist to induce a temporary menopause in the female
DRRC	Down Regulated Replacement Cycle – a type of replacement cycle using frozen embryos
Ectopic Pregnancy	A pregnancy in which the fertilised egg implants outside the uterine cavity (usually in the fallopian tube, the ovary or the abdominal cavity)
Ejaculation	Ejection of semen



<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Embryo	The early stages of fetal growth, from conception to the eighth week of pregnancy
Embryo Transfer	Transfer of an embryo to the uterus after fertilization outside the body
Endocrine Glands	Organs that secrete hormones which are released into the circulation and control various body processes; endocrine glands include the pituitary and the gonads (ovaries and testes)
Endometriosis	The presence of the normal uterine lining in areas outside of the uterus such as the fallopian tubes, ovaries and peritoneal cavity. This condition often causes painful menstruation and infertility
Endometrium	Membrane lining the uterus
Fallopian Tubes	Tubes, which lead from the uterus and end in finger like projections near the ovaries. Fertilization usually takes place in the fallopian tubes
Fertilization	Fusion of an egg (oocyte) and a sperm
Fetus	The embryo in the uterus from the third month of pregnancy
Fibroid	A non-cancerous, smooth muscle tumour found within the wall of the uterus
Follicle	Sac which contains the egg during growth and maturation found on the surface of the ovary
Follicle Stimulating Hormone	A gonadotrophic hormone released by the anterior pituitary gland, which stimulates both the growth of ovarian follicles in females and spermatogenesis in males
Follicular Phase	The phase in the menstrual cycle from menses until ovulation, which usually lasts fourteen days.
FSH	A gonadotrophic hormone released by the pituitary gland which stimulates both the growth of ovarian follicles in females and sperm production in males
Gamete	A sperm or egg
Gamete Intra-Fallopian Transfer	Assisted reproduction technique involving controlled ovarian stimulation with drugs such as gonadotrophins. Mature eggs (oocytes) obtained following stimulation are retrieved from the ovary and immediately mixed with partner or with the donor sperm. Together, the gametes are transferred directly into the fallopian tubes where fertilization may take place
Gonadotrophin-releasing hormones	Hormone which triggers secretion of FSH and LH by the pituitary gland. Produced by a part of the brain called the hypothalamus
Gonadotrophin releasing hormone Agonist	A drug which prevents the release of FSH and LH from the pituitary gland.
Gonadotrophin releasing hormone Antagonist	Drug substance which leads to blockage of the Gonadotrophin releasing hormone receptors and hence suppresses the secretion of FSH and LH
Gonadotrophin Releasing Hormone	Hormone released by the hypothalamus which acts to control the synthesis and release of follicle stimulating hormone (FSH) and lutenizing hormone (LH) by the pituitary gland
Gonadotrophins	Hormones (FSH and LH) that stimulate cell activity in the ovaries and testes, or gonads; as gonadotrophins
Gonads	Essential sex organs; the ovaries in females and testes in males
Human chorionic gonadotrophin (hCG)	Which ensures maintenance of the corpus luteum and is used in assisted reproduction techniques for triggering ovulation
Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority	Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority is the UK regulatory body of fertility treatments (See Code of Practice) Clinics carrying out fertility treatments are regularly inspected and licensed by the HFEA
HIV	Human Immunosuppressant Virus - a retrovirus that is transmitted through bodily fluids of an infected individual
Hormone	Any substance secreted by specialized cells in organs such as endocrine glands. Hormones act as chemical messengers upon the regulation of metabolic processes throughout the organism
Hypothalamus	Part of the mid brain; which is the overriding control centre of the monthly cycle



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Hysterosalpingogram	A procedure in which dye is instilled into uterus and fallopian tubes. An image is then taken of the area. This allows physicians to see any anatomical abnormalities that may be making conceiving more difficult for the female
Intra Cytoplasmic sperm injection	Involves injecting a sperm into the egg through a very fine needle. Could be used in cases with severe male factor problems. The introduction of ICSI has offered an additional treatment option for men with severe male factor abnormality who were previously limited to the option of donor sperm insemination
ICSI	See Intra Cytoplasmic Sperm Injection
Implantation	The embedding of the embryo in the lining of the uterine wall during the early stages of prenatal development
IVF	See In Vitro Fertilization
Infertility (Primary)	The inability of a couple to achieve a pregnancy after one year of regular unprotected sexual relations, or the inability of the woman to carry a pregnancy to term
Infertility (Secondary)	The inability to conceive or carry a pregnancy after having successfully conceived and carried one or more pregnancies
Insemination	Medically assisted introduction of semen into the vagina or womb
In Vitro Fertilization	Assisted reproduction technique in which mature eggs from the woman's ovaries are mixed with partner's sperm cells, and incubated so that fertilization occurs. The embryos produced by fertilization may be transferred back to the womb or frozen for late transfer
Laparoscopy	Examination of the abdominal cavity with a laparoscope passed through the abdominal wall used to inject the pelvic organs
LH Surge	The rapid rise in Lutenizing Hormone that occurs once a threshold concentration of estradiol is reached prior to ovulation
Luteal Phase	The phase in the menstrual cycle from ovulation to the next menstruation, which usually lasts 14 days; initiated by the formation of the corpus luteum, which releases increasing amounts of progesterone and estrogens to prepare the body for pregnancy
Lutenising Hormone	LH - Triggers final follicle maturation and ovulation in the middle of the cycle
Menarche	The onset of menstruation at puberty
Menopause	The cessation of menstruation due to aging ( it usually occurs between the ages of 45-50) or failure of the ovaries
Menstrual Cycle	A series of cyclical changes that occur within the female body each month to prepare it for pregnancy; also called the female reproductive cycle
Menstruation	Monthly bleeding through the vagina which sheds the endometrium
Microsurgical epidymal sperma aspiration (MESA)	Microsurgical technique used to retrieve sperm for the epididymis (long coiled tube where sperm are stored). MESA is used in cases of azoospermia
Natural Replacement Cycle	Natural replacement of cryopreserved embryos timed with the natural LH surge in a females menstrual cycle
Oestrogens	A group of hormones that are produced mainly in the ovaries in women. They are essential for normal female sexual development and for the healthy functioning of the reproductive system
OHSS	Ovarian Hyperstimulation Syndrome - A possible side effect of medically induced ovulation, characterised by swollen, painful ovaries and in some cases the accumulation of fluid in the abdomen and chest
Oligomenorrhea	Abnormally light periods or a reduction in menstruation
Oligospermia	Abnormally low number of sperm in the semen
Oocyte Retrieval	Recovery of the eggs (oocyted) contained within the ovarian follicles for in-vitro fertilisation (IVF). Generally done using ultrasound guided techniques
Oocyte/Ovum	Oocyte - An incompletely developed ovum Ovum - The secondary oocyte (female germ cell) extruded from the ovary at ovulation
oophorectomy	The surgical removal of one or both ovaries



<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Ovaries	Two nodular almond sized glands located on either side of the uterus which produce and store the egg (oocyte)s and produce the female sex hormones estrogen and progesterone
Ovulation	Expulsion of an ovum from the ovary on spontaneous rupture of a mature follicle as a result of cyclic ovarian and pituitary endocrine function
Ovulation Induction	Medical treatment to stimulate follicular growth trigger ovulation eg Clomifene
PCOD	Polycystic Ovarian Disease - Development of cysts in the ovaries due to arrested follicular growth. This condition of unknown origin is marked by hormonal imbalance in which high levels of the hormone LH are present. Infertility associated with PCO is often responsive to drug therapy
PCOS	Polycystic Ovaries
Pituitary Gland	An endocrine gland beneath the brain supplying numerous hormones including the fertility hormones FSH and LH
Progesterone	Hormone produced by the corpus luteum and placenta; prepares the uterine mucous membrane for implantation of embryo and maintains the pregnancy
Prolactin	Hormone which is produced by the pituitary gland and which is responsible for milk formation after the birth. A too high prolactin level may be the cause of a fertility problem
Pronucleas	Referring to the nucleus of the egg or the sperm cell after fertilisation
Semen	The sperm and seminal secretions ejaculated during orgasm
Semen Analysis	Semen is observed under a microscope to evaluate the number of sperm, the percentage that are moving and how well they are moving. Their shape and size is then assessed
SO/IUI	Super Ovulation/ Intrauterine Insemination – a treatment using prepared sperm into the uterus
Sperm	The male reproductive cell, containing 23 of the required 46 chromosomes
Sperm Wash	Technique for separating sperm from seminal fluid in preparation for use
Sterility	The total inability to reproduce. Not to be confused with infertility
Surrogate	A woman who becomes pregnant on behalf of a subfertile commissioning couple, and who also agrees on delivery to offer the child to the commissioning couple for adoption
Swim Up Test	This technique separates motile sperm from non-motile sperm and cellular debris in a semen sample. The most motile sperm will 'swim up' in a small volume of media so they can be more easily separated for insemination
Testicles	The two male sex glands contained in the scrotum. They produce the hormone testosterone and produce the male reproductive cells, the sperm
Testicular Sperm Extraction	(TESE) Microsurgical technique used to retrieve sperm directly from the testes after testicular tissue are used for further fertilization through intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI). TESE is used instances where no sperm are stored in the epididymis or when there is no epididymis
Testosterone	The most potent male sex hormone; produced in the testis
Turner's Syndrome	Rare chromosomal abnormality of the female. Turner's syndrome principally results in abnormal development of the ovaries and short stature. Women with this condition are sterile.
Ultrasound	A procedure in which sound waves are passed through the body and converted into an image to assess the size and shape of the reproductive organs; especially useful in diagnosing ovulatory problems and in monitoring follicular development
Uterus	The muscular structure of the female reproductive system in which an embryo implants and develops until the time of birth
Vaginal Ultrasound	Visualisation of the woman's pelvis by projecting sound waves through a probe which is inserted into the vagina
Vas Deferens	A pair of thick walled tubes about 45cm long in the male that lead from the epididymis to the ejaculatory duct in the prostate
Zygote	An embryo in the early stages of development