

Background

In March 2020 the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic caused a temporary closure of all UK fertility clinics. Treatments have now recommenced but we must continue to ensure that we provide a safe service for patients and a safe working environment for Centre staff. Before commencing treatment please read this information carefully. You will be offered the choice of whether to proceed with or postpone your treatment.

This is still an evolving situation, further disruptions including treatment cancellations and Centre closures are still possible.

Is it safe to have fertility treatment now?

If you would prefer to defer your treatment until after the pandemic, this option is open to you without any penalty.

All patients who have underlying medical conditions will have the opportunity to discuss their specific circumstances before making a decision about commencing treatment. Risk factors for severe covid-19 in pregnancy include increasing maternal age, high body mass index, and pre-existing comorbidities.

Recent evidence advises that pregnant women with Covid 19 are more likely to experience preterm birth and their babies are more likely to be admitted to a neonatal unit. There is no evidence at this time that the virus causes birth defects. Transmission of the virus from a woman to her baby during pregnancy or during labour and delivery is thought to be probable, although the proportion of pregnancies affected and the significance to the baby has yet to be determined.

Nonetheless, pregnancy itself does alter the body's immune system and response to viral infections in general, which can occasionally cause more severe symptoms, particularly towards the end of pregnancy.

You will need to take this into consideration and actively consent to having treatment whilst there is a risk that you could contract Covid-19 either during the treatment or if successful, during pregnancy.

The risks about the impact of Covid-19 on pregnancy have been considered by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) who are regularly updating their guidance (www.rcog.org.uk) as the new evidence is emerging.

What is the Centre doing to protect myself and others from Covid-19?

- Use of alcohol gel /hand washing on arrival and before leaving the Centre.
- Clinic staff will wear face masks and all patients must wear face coverings when attending appointments.
- Social distancing - ensuring 2 metres distance where possible.
- Reducing number of patients in Centre at any one time.
- Providing personal protective equipment for staff members and ensuring appropriate use at all times.
- The Centre is adhering to a strict cleaning schedule
- Cancelling treatment cycles where there is suspicion of Covid-19 infection.
- All staff members will be instructed to avoid unnecessary exposure (both at work and in private) as per current government policies for social distancing.

- If any staff member is at risk of Covid-19 they will be advised isolation/testing as per local policy (as advised by Health Protection Scotland).

What can I do to protect myself and others from Covid-19?

It is very important that you minimise your chance of getting Covid-19 infection prior to and during your treatment.

- Please follow the advice of the Scottish government – see <https://www.gov.scot/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance/>
- Please wear a face covering when attending the Centre as advised by the Scottish Government.

It is important that you attend your appointments with us only at the time that you have been allocated. Please build-in time for travel and parking so that you are not late

What are the symptoms of Covid-19?

The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature).
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual).
- Loss of taste or smell.

Other symptoms include: hoarseness, nasal discharge/congestion, shortness of breath, sore throat, wheezing or sneezing, tiredness, and muscle aches and pains.

What should I do if I or anyone in my household has symptoms of Covid-19?

- Do not attend the Centre in person if you have symptoms of Covid-19 or have been in contact with anyone with symptoms of Covid-19 or who has been diagnosed with Covid-19.
- Do contact the Centre by telephone for advice 01224 553101 option 2.

If you need advice regarding coronavirus symptoms please use the 111 online coronavirus service (<https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19/>).

Is the Centre screening patients for Covid-19?

To protect you and our staff, we will not be treating any patients with Covid symptoms. We trust that all patients will answer these questions honestly so that we can reduce the risk of transmission of the virus to other patients and staff members.

All patients that are to be scheduled for egg recovery will have a swab taken to test for Covid 19, around 48 hours before procedure. The results should be available before the trigger is taken. If any patient is found to be positive the egg recovery procedure will not proceed.

If my partner, a member of our household or myself, develops symptoms of Covid-19 during treatment, what will happen?

Contact the Centre by telephone for advice before attending any appointments.

If we are unable to proceed with your treatment in a manner that is safe for staff and other patients it would be necessary to cancel your cycle.

What happens if my cycle is cancelled because of risk of infection with Covid-19?

- The cancelled cycle will not count as an NHS funded cycle.
- If self-funding, a further cycle with no additional charge or a full refund will be offered.
- Your treatment cycle will be re-scheduled for the earliest available slot.

Which appointments should my partner attend with me?

To minimise the risk of spreading the virus, it is important to reduce the number of people attending the Centre. Therefore, we ask that you attend most of your appointments by yourself. Further information on partners attending appointments can be found here. - <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making-scotlands-route-map-through-out-crisis-phase-3-update/pages/8/> . In line with national guidance partners may be permitted to attend early pregnancy scan appointment. There may be certain circumstances where your partner will be required to attend the Centre. We will notify you in advance which appointments these apply to as they will have to undertake a screening questionnaire the day before the appointment. Unfortunately, children will not be permitted.

What support is available to me?

- Our Counsellor is available to undertake video sessions Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday contact our secretarial team 01224 553101 option 3.
- **Fertility Network UK** (fertilitynetworkuk.org) provides free and impartial **support**, advice, information and understanding for anyone affected by fertility issues.
- If you are feeling low or anxious, information and support is available from: Breathing Space <https://www.breathingspace.scot/> , NHS Inform [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): Your mental wellbeing](#) | [NHS inform](#) and SAMH [coronavirus and your mental wellbeing](#)

Where can I get further information?

<https://www.gov.scot/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance/>
<https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/coronavirus-covid-19>
<https://www.hfea.gov.uk/treatments/covid-19-and-fertility-treatment/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-for-patients/frequently-asked-questions-for-patients-on-coronavirus-covid-19/>
<https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/coronavirus-covid-19-pregnancy-and-womens-health/>
<https://www.britishfertilitysociety.org.uk/2020/05/01/position-statement-on-the-resumption-of-fertility-treatment-in-the-uk-during-covid-19-pandemic/>