

PATIENT INSTRUCTIONS FOR:
INJECTABLE FERTILITY DRUGS
(*Gonal-F, Follistim, Repronex, Bravelle and Menopur*)



These medications are either made of follicle stimulating hormone (FSH) synthesized in a lab (Follistim, Gonal-F), FSH extracted from urine (Bravelle) or a mixture of FSH and LH (Repronex, Menopur) extracted from urine. They all work the same way by directly stimulating the ovaries to encourage the growth of multiple eggs. The former medications are purer but more expensive. The medications are given by **daily injection starting of the third day** of the menstrual cycle, **for 7-10 days on average**, by a small “subcutaneous” needle. Occasionally, they may given by intramuscular injection in the buttocks.

The cycle will **start with an ultrasound on the 2nd, 3rd or 4th day of your period**. You will need to schedule an ultrasound appointment in our early morning hours (Monday through Friday) We will do our best to get you out as quickly as possible. If you need an ultrasound for cycle monitoring, we will always fit you in. Saturday appointments are scheduled on an as needed basis.

At the time of your first ultrasound, you will have blood work drawn, an ultrasound performed and the doctor will teach you how to do the injections. You will then be instructed when to come in for the next ultrasound and blood work, usually the next one is 3-4 days later, then about every 1-2 days until the eggs are mature. During that time, your dosage of fertility drugs will stay the same unless the doctor instructs you otherwise.

The growth of your eggs is determined by the size of the follicles (small cysts which contain the eggs) on ultrasound, and a rise in estradiol (estrogen level). When the largest egg reaches a mature size (about 18 mm), an hCG shot (Novarel, generic chorionic gonadotropin or Ovidrel) is given at home. Unlike the other hCGs, Ovidrel can be give with a small needle. After the hCG (typically 36hrs later), insemination is usually performed. A semen specimen is brought in from home, washed and injected into the uterus at the time of ovulation.

One week after the IUI, or the closest weekday, you will come in for a follow-up ultrasound, blood work and a second hCG shot to help out if you are pregnant. Please bring the second vial of hCG/ Ovidrel in with you at that time. Two weeks after the IUI, you can check a home pregnancy test, and if it is positive, you should make an appointment for a blood pregnancy test.

These are strong medications, are very effective but do have some serious side effects. Redness or burning at the injection site, headaches and mood swings may occur. There is a high multiple pregnancy rate (about 20-25%), mostly twins or triplets. They may also cause ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome in which the abdomen and sometimes even the lungs fill up with fluid, and the ovaries become very large. Mild hyperstimulation is common, but severe or life-threatening hyperstimulation requiring hospitalization is not.