

QUESTIONS TO ASK
About Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) Programs (#1)

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Deciding on which clinic to go to for an IVF, or GIFT cycle is a major decision. The resource for clinic specific data and success rates is the report entitled *Assisted Reproductive Technology Success Rates: National Summary and Fertility Clinic Reports*. The 1998 Report, has verified information about the outcomes of ART cycles started in 1998, and was published by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and is available. Call 770-488-5372 to order the report, or visit RESOLVE's web site at www.resolve.org for a direct link to the report at the CDC's web site.

The following questions may also help you choose a clinic:

CREDENTIALS:

- ! What are the credentials and training of the IVF staff and is the clinic affiliated with an academic medical center?
- ! Is the clinic an active or associated member of the Society for Assisted Reproductive Technologies (SART) a special interest group of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine?

SUCCESS RATES IN THE LAST TWELVE MONTHS:

- ! Does the clinic report data to SART?
- ! When did the clinic start offering ART? Clinical staff with long experience may have a good record of success.
- ! How many egg retrievals has the clinic performed in the last twelve months?
- ! How many patients undergo embryo transfers per month?
- ! How many clinical pregnancies (confirmed by ultrasound and fetal heartsounds) has the clinic had relative to the number of embryo transfers?
- ! How many live births has the clinic had relative to the number of transfers?
- ! How many of these were multiple pregnancies?
- ! What is the miscarriage rate for the program?
- ! If you are over 40 or there is a male factor infertility problem, ask about number of egg retrievals and number of embryo transfers and clinical pregnancy rates for each of these categories.
- ! If you are over 40 with no male factor infertility, ask about the number of egg retrievals and embryo transfers and clinical pregnancy rates for this category.
- ! If you have a particular diagnosis, ask what the success rates are for that particular diagnosis.

SERVICES AND COSTS:

- ! What tests, if any, will be repeated by the clinic prior to starting an ART cycle?
- ! Does the clinic provide general infertility services as well? This is particularly important if you are not sure if you are an appropriate ART candidate.
- ! Are there specific times in the year when the clinic closes down and does not offer ART?
- Does the clinic have its own lab director? If not, how many labs does the director supervise?
- ! What are the clinic hours and lab hours? This is important if you work and need ultrasounds, etc., done before going to work. Is the lab open weekends and holidays?
- ! When in the cycle does the clinic start ovulation induction protocols?
- ! Does the clinic use drugs to suppress your hormones (Lupron, Antagon) before or during ovulation stimulation?
- ! Will the clinic consider minimal stimulation cycles to reduce the amount of drugs used?
- Does the clinic culture the embryos to blastocyst stage?
- ! Does the clinic offer micromanipulation techniques? If so, which ones are available (ICSI or assisted hatching)?
- ! Will the clinic freeze extra embryos? At what stage in cell division is this done?
- ! Can you choose to donate any excess eggs to a donor egg pool to be used by another couple?
- ! What does each cycle cost, including drugs, etc.? How much is covered by insurance? Do you have to pay up front or can you pay in installments? If a cycle is canceled because of poor ovulation response, what is your financial responsibility?

SUPPORT SERVICES:

- ! Are counseling services available?
- ! Does the clinic have a "contact system" of patients who have completed their program, successfully or not, with whom you can speak?
- ! Is there an intake interview? Will you meet with a doctor, nurse, therapist and/or financial manager? What are the fees for these appointments?

SUGGESTED READINGS:

"A Patient's Guide To The Assisted Reproductive Technologies." This booklet is available from the American Society for Reproductive Medicine for \$1.00 (1209 Montgomery Hwy., Birmingham, AL 35216-2809).

"Advanced Reproductive Technologies," "Understanding Assisted Reproductive Technology Clinic Success Rates and Treatment," "Collected Articles on IVF" and "Donor Egg." RESOLVE fact sheets available through National RESOLVE.

Further information on this topic is available through RESOLVE fact sheets. For a publications order form, please contact the local chapter or National RESOLVE Office at 1310 Broadway, Somerville, MA 02144-1731 or 617/623-0744.

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