



access **fertility**
helping you **succeed**



CHOOSING A FERTILITY CLINIC

We understand that choosing a fertility clinic is a very personal decision. We also appreciate that most people choosing a fertility clinic are new to IVF. It can also be confusing as every clinic has different information or success rates on their website.

We spoke to 100 patients to find out what advice they had for people choosing a fertility clinic.

The three Cs

- Clinical Success Rates
 - Convenience
 - Cost
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Clinical Success Rates

There are a number of ways clinics present their success rates. It's important that you get to grips with different types of success rates so that you can make meaningful comparisons.

In the UK we are lucky to have the Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority (HFEA) which monitors all treatment delivered by fertility clinics. The HFEA collects all treatment outcomes from all fertility clinics and publishes the success rates on its website www.hfea.gov.uk. All the success rates presented by the HFEA are displayed in the same way so it's easy to understand and make comparisons between clinics.

The most important numbers you need to consider are 'Live birth per cycle initiated' (LBR) and the number of patients treated in your age group. The LBR tells you what percentage of patients had a baby for every IVF cycle started by the clinic by age. The number of patients treated in your age group is also important as a low number means that overall success rate number may be less reliable.



Convenience

More than half of the patients we spoke with recommended picking a clinic that was within one hour of your home or workplace.

IVF is a complex process and you could be required to visit the clinic between 5-7 times on average. Appointments at the clinic often take place in the mornings so it's worth thinking about whether this works for you and whether the clinic is flexible or not.

The majority of your appointments will take place during the working week so it's important to understand how you can manage your visits around your job. You should ask the clinic about their opening hours and highlight any requirements you may have i.e. I can only make afternoons, before your treatment starts.

It's also worth considering how you would get to the clinic from work as well as home. Is it a busy route? How will you get there and back? If there's a partner involved is the clinic also convenient for them to get to? IVF treatment can be very demanding so it's important to know that getting to and from the clinic won't cause you any undue stress.



Cost

Many patients complain that they don't have a clear understanding of the total cost of treatment until they are well into the process. Most clinics do not 'package' their prices as there are many variables involved in IVF treatment depending on the individual or couples medical requirements.

Before picking a clinic you should ask the clinic to outline the prices for every appointment, scan, and technique included in their "average" cycle. This should include initial consultation, screening blood tests, stimulation appointments, scans and blood tests as well as egg collection, embryo transfer and embryo freezing.

This may not cover everything but it will give you a starting point. If you have any specific requirements or needs highlighted by your doctor it's important to ask whether there are any additional services you will need and how much they will cost. Remember, medication is not included in these costs.





Other things you may wish to ask your clinic

There are no right or wrong answers to these questions, however, the answer may be very important to you and alter which clinic you choose.

- Does the clinic offer onsite counselling and if so how much does it cost?
- Do you see a doctor at all of your appointments?
- Is there a waiting time to start treatment?
- How did they do on their last HFEA inspection?

Another thing you should ask them is whether they have treatment criteria.

Some clinics will not treat women:

- over a certain age;
- with a body mass index over 30;
- with low fertility hormone levels.

Final Tips

Lastly, try and visit the clinic for a free tour or open evening before you commit to a consultation which can cost anywhere from £160 to over £200.

How do the environment and staff make you feel? You're likely to have a lot of questions, that's normal. You should pick a clinic that takes the time to answer the questions at the beginning of the process as this will be a good indication of the level of care you can expect throughout.

