

Your Yesmom Fertility Doctor Discussion Guide

The recent advances in medicine and technology have altered the way we think about fertility. A lot of options have now opened up for women who are unable to conceive or for those who want to conceive at a later date. In this guide, we have addressed all such concerns and frequently asked questions regarding Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ARTs) such as egg freezing and the in-vitro fertilization (IVF). By helping you understand these modern technologies better, we strive to guide you through your fertility journey.

The Specialist: A Reproductive Endocrinologist

While looking for a specialist in the field of fertility, make sure to find a reputed “reproductive endocrinologist” (RE).

The reproductive endocrinologists are a board-certified doctor with years of intense training, both in obstetrics and gynecology. They are specialized in providing fertility treatments using assisted reproductive technologies. Their work mainly focuses on helping women to conceive and carry their pregnancy to term.

Finding the Right Reproductive Endocrinologist

It's best to begin your search by asking your gynecologists for a referral. Do your research and make a list of questions to ask. Compare and filter your choice of a reproductive endocrinologist by taking these important factors below into consideration.

- **2 things to find in your chosen doctor**




- **Expertise** - Make sure that your chosen one is an obstetrician-gynecologist (OB-GYN) who has completed the required 3-year training for treating fertility issues.
- **Experience** - It is essential to check the doctor's years of experience. With more years of experience, s/he tends to be more proficient in her/his tasks.
- **2 things to check on her/his clinic**
 - **Specialized area** - Check for the clinic's area of specialization, whether they have a team approach or only a single specialist. Decide if you are fine with their approach. You should also check if the clinic is equipped with all the necessary technologies, and what are the services they offer.
 - **Success** - Check for the clinic's success rate of the treatment you need. Find out how many cases they have handled successfully for your age range. Moreover, make sure they have a good track record and reputation.

Educate yourself about the infertility treatments, and be aware of possible concerns you may have. Take your time to develop trust and decide you are on the right path, and the discussion with your RE will be a piece of cake!

Before Meeting the Reproductive Endocrinologist

Given below are more points to take into consideration before booking your appointment.

- **Cost of the procedure** - Learn what are the necessary procedures for your treatment. Then roughly estimate how much the procedure may cost, and ask if anything comes under insurance coverage.
 - **Duration of the procedure** - It generally takes about four to six weeks to complete one cycle of IVF, but please check their website for a confirmation.
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- **Working hours** - You may have to visit the clinic every other day during your treatment. Make sure the timings of the clinic match your schedule.
- **Pre-consultation steps** - Your RE will require you to undergo certain tests to assess your ovaries and uterine function, to determine the best approach for your egg freezing/IVF therapy. It's best to learn which tests are required and get them done, so that you can visit the RE with the ready test reports.

First Appointment with Your RE

The doctor will do an in-depth evaluation of your medical history. S/he will also outline the diagnostics and the required treatment plans. This visit may take 30 to 60 minutes. Whether you want to go for IVF or egg freezing, there are some important things to take with for your consultation, such as:

- **Your medical record** - Before your visit to the fertility clinic, arrange all your medical records and test reports.
- **Notebook to write down instructions** - Your first visit will be filled with emotions and you may feel overloaded with information. Writing down some important instructions may help you to remember things and feel more at ease.
- **List of your questions** - Write down the questions you want to ask, and carry this list with you. It will ensure you don't forget or miss out any of your questions.
- **You may need emotional support** - During your visit, you may need someone to be there for you. It is better to go with your partner or a friend. This also helps the fertility team to better deal with your emotional state.

Questions to Ask During the Consultation

After your doctor has reviewed your medical history and previous test reports, you may ask the following questions.



- **What additional tests do you recommend that can help with diagnosis?**

A fertility doctor uses a combination of tests to determine the health of your ovaries and eggs. Your doctor may suggest some blood tests and FSH level tests to plan your treatment.

- **What are the possible treatment options for me?**

Thanks to the latest technologies, there are many different approaches available for treating fertility issues. There are different types of treatments apart from IVF and egg freezing, such as the IUI and embryo donation. Your doctor can help you to decide which one is the best option for you.

- **What is a good number of eggs to freeze?**

The success of this technology lies in numbers, which means the more eggs you have the better chances of selecting a healthy egg and having a baby. If you are younger than 35, you will be asked to freeze 10 to 20 eggs. It gives you an 80% chance of a successful birth rate. If you are 38 to 40 years old, the success rate may drop to 35%. Using these frozen eggs is a multi-step procedure, apparently some eggs may not be healthy and some may not attach to the uterus.

- **Ask about the security and transportation of frozen eggs:**

Frozen eggs are stored in liquid nitrogen at a temperature of -196 °C. Make sure the clinic is equipped with all the latest technologies required to maintain healthy eggs. Also, check if they have an option for the transportation of eggs when needed.

- **What are the potential risks?**

Though there are no proven long-term effects of IVF, this procedure can be financially, physically, and emotionally draining. But for most people, the effort becomes worth, when the whole process turns out successfully and they hold their own biological baby in their hands.



Egg Freezing/IVF Protocol

After going through your medical history and ultrasound, your doctor will decide your IVF or Egg freezing protocol. You will be prescribed a certain fertility medications to stimulate follicle development in your ovaries. This is referred to as the egg freezing/IVF protocol. There is no standard rule, each protocol will be designed by your RE based on individual needs. Timing is the key to IVF protocol, so all medications must be taken as prescribed especially the hormone stimulating medications

- **Mild side effects** such as nausea, blurred vision, bloating, headache or hot flushes can occur during this protocol. During your IVF therapy, your doctor will continuously monitor you with frequent ultrasounds to check the development of your follicles.
- **If you develop OHSS**, your mature follicles will be fertilized and frozen. You will be allowed to rest and your treatment procedure will continue at a later date when your body is ready for it again.
- **Diagnostic Tests For Egg Freezing** - To identify any genetic defect or chromosome abnormality preimplantation genetic testing is done. This enables the doctor to select healthy embryos for egg freezing or IVF. The main aim of this test is to make healthy babies free from any genetic abnormalities.

You are not alone in this journey. A team of health care professionals and your RE will provide you with support and guidance. Some clinics also provide a genetic counselor who is trained to help you understand the associated genetic issues. The counselor will answer all your queries and help to design your treatment.



Cost of Egg freezing and IVF in India

The cost of these treatments in India varies depending on the procedure followed, equipment used and the care provided. The charges in smaller cities like Pune will be much lower than the major metros like Mumbai or Bangalore.

- The first consultation charges itself may range from Rs. 500 to Rs 1000.
- Egg freezing costs in India range from Rs. 30,000 to 50,000 per year.
- The IVF cost in India normally ranges from Rs. 90,000 to 1 lakh for one cycle.
- The required medications and injections will cost another Rs. 30,000 to 50,000.
So the total cost will vary from 1 to 2 lakhs per cycle.

You may need more egg retrieval cycles than anticipated to collect the desired number of eggs and each cycle will usually be charged separately. So the cost may add up more than the initial calculations. In India IVF and infertility related issues are not covered under medical insurance, but some hospitals claim to provide EMI facility and financial help.

Final Note

If you are planning to undergo egg freezing or IVF, carefully assess the treatment center you are opting for. Egg freezing and IVF procedures can be expensive and emotionally/physically stressful. So it is important to be well prepared for it by understanding the processes involved, the risks and the gains. Modern fertility clinics and doctors are all equipped with the latest technologies to provide the best possible treatment.

The ideal way to understand your fertility success rate is to arrange for a consultation with your reproductive endocrinologist. Understand your personal health needs by



discussing with your doctor and give yourself the best chance to take home a healthy baby.

