Bridge

THE LONDON BRIDGE FERTILITY, GYNAECOLOGY AND GENETICS CENTRE

Blastocyst Transfer

Introduction

A blastocyst is a highly developed embryo that has divided many times into a large number of cells. An embryo reaches this advanced stage of development on day five or six following insemination.

Bridge offers blastocyst culture and transfer to patients undergoing IVF subject to a number of essential conditions being met. This technique enables us to maintain, or even increase, our IVF success rates whilst significantly decreasing the risk of multiple pregnancy (twins or triplets).

The Timing of Embryo Transfer

During IVF the embryo transfer is usually carried out on day 2 or 3 following the egg collection. At this time the embryos are at the 2-8 cell stage of development. It is very difficult for embryologists to select accurately which embryos have the best chance of forming a pregnancy at such an early stage of their development but they are all carefully checked using a well-established grading system and the best one or two are transferred in the hope that at least one will implant and result in a live birth.

Sometimes both embryos will form ongoing pregnancies and the result is a multiple (twin or triplet) pregnancy. Multiple pregnancies are associated with an increased risk of complications, such as pre-term delivery, as well as long-term financial implications. It is preferable therefore to transfer only one very good embryo so that those patients who become pregnant only have a single baby, except in the rare occasions when a single embryo cleaves and twins result.

What are the advantages of blastocyst transfer?

Whilst the majority of fertilised eggs will develop into 4-cell embryos, only about half of these embryos will develop to the important blastocyst stage. Therefore, blastocysts are a more “select” group of embryos with a higher chance of implantation. Because they are more likely to form a pregnancy, single embryo transfer can be undertaken without reducing the chance of pregnancy.

Which patients will benefit from blastocyst transfer?

Deciding which patients will benefit from blastocyst transfer is a rapidly developing area. Bridge offers blastocyst transfer to those patients who we predict will develop a large number of embryos and who would have a high risk of a multiple pregnancy if more than 1 embryo was transferred.

Also, we will recommend it to older patients (age 38 to 44 years) who have a large number of embryos but who have a lower chance of pregnancy because of their age. Blastocyst transfer will allow us better selection of the embryos to transfer.

Blastocyst Transfer

Blastocysts are transferred in the same way that embryos are transferred except that, instead of the usual progesterone pessaries that are administered during IVF, you will be asked to have injectable progesterone.

Your pregnancy test will be due either 11 or 12 days following the Blastocyst Transfer. We will advise you of the date at the time of the transfer.

For Further Information

Call Admissions on 020 7089 1449 and ask for a copy of 'Bridge Patient Information – Blastocyst Transfer'.