

Centre for Reproductive Medicine

Endometrial Biopsy / Endometrial Scratch (ES) prior to IVF/ICSI

Information for Patients

Definition: This is an out-patient procedure to curette or scratch the lining of the womb gently (causing endometrial injury) or to obtain a sample from lining of the womb which is performed approximately 1 week after you have ovulated (released an egg) which is defined as luteal phase. This is usually on days 18-26 of the menstrual cycle prior to having fertility treatment. However, there is no evidence to suggest that these are the most appropriate days for endometrial scratch.

Purpose: To improve implantation of the embryo, clinical pregnancy and live birth rates during IVF ICSI treatment. The procedure is supported by evidence and recommended by Cochrane review Nastri et al 2012 and two recent meta-analysis El-Toukhy et al 2012, Potdar et al 2012.

Pre- assessment: This is an intervention to improve success of fertility treatment or IVF/ICSI treatment cycle.

- Vaginal and cervical Swabs should be taken to exclude any genital infection prior to this procedure (unless these have been performed within the last six months). This can be arranged with your GP.

Endometrial scratch cannot be performed in the following circumstances: There are a number of circumstances in which the test should **not** be undertaken. These include:

- If there is a possibility of pregnancy
- Evidence of active pelvic infection
- Abnormal cervical discharge at the time of procedures
- Abnormal appearance of cervix
- If there is vaginal bleeding (i.e. a period)
- If the cervix is stenosed (tightly shut)
- Very large Uterus (10-15 cm in size)

We will not do the test if there is a possibility of vaginal or pelvic infection. It is our policy that all patients are screened for genital infection prior to the procedure.

Please ensure you have not had unprotected intercourse in the month you are having endometrial scratch or if there is a possibility of pregnancy.

Preparation:

Please take one tablet of Neurofen/Brufen (400 mgs) ½ to 1 hour before the procedure. If you are allergic to Neurofen/Brufen or if you are asthmatic, please take two tablets of Paramol (Paracetamol and Codeine phosphate) instead, ½ to 1 hour before the procedure.

Please take a bath or shower on the morning of the procedure.

You may be prescribed an antibiotic by the clinician performing the procedure on the day of the procedure.

Timing of the Endometrial Scratch:

- The procedure could only be performed during second half of the menstrual cycle (approximately Days 18-26 of the cycle) prior to your IVF ICSI treatment cycle.
- It cannot be performed on the day of oocyte retrieval because this may reduce clinical and ongoing pregnancy rates

Procedure:

After an informed written consent we will perform

- Vaginal ultrasound scan
- Pass a vaginal speculum as when you have a cervical (PAP) smear test taken
- Passing a fine catheter through the cervix to do an endometrial scratch
- Occasionally we may have to hold the cervix (neck of the womb) with an instrument called tenaculum.

The procedure will last 10 minutes. You may experience a tummy cramp (period like discomfort) in the lower part of the abdomen both during and for a short while after the procedure.). You may bleed minimally and occasionally your periods may start early. You do not need to have any specific time for rest afterwards. You may need a few hours off your normal schedule after the procedure as there may be some uncomfortable cramp like discomfort in the lower abdomen for an hour or so after. You may also feel faint and therefore you should be accompanied on your way home.

Please do not bring anyone under the age of 18 with you that you are responsible for to this procedure.

The tissue obtained during endometrial scratch could be used for research purposes anonymously or sent for an examination in the laboratory if you provide consent. Otherwise the tissue will be disposed with dignity according to Human Tissue Act.

Risks and Complications:

- Unsuccessful procedure if the neck of the womb is tightly shut.
- Abdominal discomfort which generally passes off within a few hours
- Pelvic infection can flare up – we will need you to have vaginal swabs for infection and Chlamydia swabs taken before hand. If there is evidence of infection at the time the procedure then the procedure will be cancelled and rescheduled after the infection is treated.
- Prophylactic antibiotic may be provided to patients having this procedure. This procedure is not suitable for people who are at risk of endocarditis (heart infection).
- Inadequate endometrial sample
- Persistent heavy bleeding is a rare complication (less than 1%)
- Uterine perforation- is an extremely rare complication (less than 0.01%). There is no evidence to suggest that this procedure may cause uterine perforation but has a theoretical risk.

Please note that the session will be to undertake endometrial scratch only.

Unfortunately, there will be no opportunity to discuss any results or treatment amendments at this appointment. However, if you do wish to have a pelvic scan or a consultation during the endometrial scratch procedure, then inform the Consultant who can make provisions for this at an extra cost.

You will then continue with your IVF/ICSI treatment as planned. This procedure will not delay the start of your treatment as it is performed in the menstrual cycles before the procedure.

This test is not currently funded by the NHS. The cost of this procedure is non – refundable.

To organise this test, please e-mail the relevant consultant:

Rina Agrawal - Rina.agrawal@uhcw.nhs.uk or rina.agrawal@nhs.net

or

Tarek Ghobara - Tarek.ghobara@uhcw.nhs.uk

You will need to provide the consultant with the following information:

- Full name/Date of birth

- Hospital Number
- Contact Number
- The treatment you are having (e.g IVF/ICSI/FET)
- If you doing the long or short protocol (IVF/ICSI)
- If you are doing FET Natural or HRT
- When you will be starting treatment- (date)
- When was the first day of your last period
- How long is your menstrual cycle
- Do you ovulate on a regular basis?

If you require any further information please contact CRM on 024 76968879.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language, please contact the Quality Manager on (024) 76968864, and we will do our best to accommodate your needs. The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

Document History

Author: R Agrawal/S Keaveney
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Contact Tel No: (024) 76968879
Doc. Location: QM Computer/I drive (patient information)/egg donation printing (information session recip and sharer)
Version: GEN-PI-000263V10
Reference No: Quality/information sheets/endometrial biopsy prior to IVF pt info
Review Date: March 2024
Revision History: January 2020 (no changes), March 2023 (amends)