

Trial of Catheter

Information for Patients and Partners



What is this leaflet about?

This leaflet has been produced to provide information on the procedure known as a ‘trial of catheter’, also known as a ‘mock transfer’. Your doctor will inform you if this procedure is needed to help with your treatment.

What is Trial of Catheter?

A trial of catheter gives your doctor the opportunity to assess the technique needed to do your actual embryo transfer in cases where it is suspected that it may be difficult.

Why is a Trial of Catheter done?

Having a catheter trial is similar to having an embryo transfer. During an embryo transfer a very soft catheter (bendy tube) containing your embryo is guided into the womb (uterus). Difficult embryo transfers have been linked with lower pregnancy success rates. If we think there may be difficulty during an embryo transfer, we may recommend a trial of catheter before we do the embryo transfer to decide the best method of doing the actual embryo transfer and ensuring there are no unexpected problems that may make the transfer difficult.

The aim of the procedure is to choose the best catheter to use given your individual circumstance, to ensure there is nothing to prevent the catheter from entering the neck of the womb (cervix) smoothly.

Who is the procedure for?

This procedure is for people who have had any previous surgery to their cervix or uterus, uterine abnormalities, cervical fibroids, previous difficult intra-uterine insemination or transfer procedures or any other factor that can make the passage through the cervix into the uterine cavity difficult.

How to book an appointment for the Trial of Catheter?

Trial of catheter can be performed at any time during the menstrual cycle; however, most often it is planned between day 18-21 of your cycle. You need to inform the administration office (0116 2585922) or nursing staff on the first day of your period to book for the trial of catheter.

What does the Trial of Catheter involve?

The trial of catheter is usually performed before starting the IVF/ICSI or FET cycle. Often it is performed in the month before the ovarian stimulation medications for IVF/ICSI or FET tablets. You will be asked to arrive for your appointment with a full bladder. This is because your full bladder pushes the uterus into a position which makes the procedure easier and provides better visibility on the ultrasound scan. A speculum (smooth tube-like instrument) will be used to help your doctor see your cervix, like having a smear test, and the catheter will be guided through the cervix into your uterus under ultrasound guidance. You may feel cramping or a sharp but tolerable pain when the catheter is placed into position. Some women feel discomfort similar to a smear test.

You must use barrier methods of contraception during the cycle of the trial of catheter appointment.

Leicester Fertility Centre is unable to guarantee that your treatment will be carried out by a specific doctor. Please let us know if you would not proceed with treatment unless a specific doctor was available.

Is a general anaesthetic required?

General anaesthetic (put to sleep) is rarely required and the procedure is usually performed whilst you are awake. If you are unable to tolerate the speculum or experience severe discomfort we will stop the procedure and your doctor will discuss with you possible alternatives. In some cases it maybe necessary to carry out the procedure under sedation.

What are the risks involved?

It is generally considered a safe procedure. There is a rare chance of developing an infection. If you develop a fever within a few days of the procedure, experience severe cramping, or heavy bleeding, or offensive vaginal discharge, or if you are concerned at any time, please contact the fertility unit for further advice. There is also a small chance that the procedure gets abandoned due to difficult entry of the catheter into the cervix. A further procedure would then be discussed with you.

In certain cases where there is difficulty to enter the cervix, Dilapan is used to soften the cervix and help with catheter passage (see below).

How much does it cost?

Currently if your treatment is funded by the NHS, you may be eligible to have the procedure performed without cost. However, if you are paying for your treatment an additional cost will be incurred.

DILAPAN

What is Dilapan?

It is a small rod made of water absorbing gel that softens and opens the cervix.



When is it used?

If you have a tight cervix that does not allow the embryo transfer catheter to pass through into the uterus, it is used to soften the cervix and help easy passage of the catheter for smooth embryo transfer.

It is used at the time of trial of catheter and before your actual embryo transfer. The effect may last for up to 3 months.

How is it used?

You will be placed on the examination couch with legs in the stirrup, a speculum will be used to help your doctor see the cervix (like having a smear test), and the doctor will place the dilapan rod into the cervix. You will be allowed to rest in one of the rooms for 1-2 hours. You will then be brought back to the examination couch, the dilapan is removed by the strings attached to the rod (it is pain free) and the trial of catheter performed straight after.

What are the risks with Dilapan use?

There is a rare chance of developing an infection. If you develop a fever within a few days of the procedure, experience severe cramping, or heavy bleeding, or offensive vaginal discharge, or if you are concerned at any time, please contact the fertility unit for further advice. There is also a small chance that the procedure gets abandoned due to difficult entry. A further procedure of cervical dilatation under general anaesthesia would then be required.

Our commitment to patients

We are constantly striving to improve our services to patients, and we will welcome your comments or suggestions for improvement.

Leicester Fertility Centre Contact Details

Tel: 0116 2585922
E-mail: LFCinfo@uhl-tr.nhs.uk
Website: www.leicesterfertilitycentre.org.uk

Useful addresses

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority: www.hfea.gov.uk
NICE guidelines: www.nice.org.uk
NHS - Response line: [111.nhs.uk](tel:111) / 111
NHS - Smoking helpline: 0300 123 1044
Fertility Network UK: www.fertilitynetworkuk.org / 0121 323 5025

Do you feel that you are at risk of verbal or physical abuse? If so, you may find the following numbers useful:

Domestic Violence Helpline:

United against violence & abuse (UAVA)

0808 802 0028



This information was correct at the time of printing. While the Trust makes every reasonable effort to keep its information leaflets up to date, very recent changes may not be reflected in the guidance and you should discuss this with the clinical staff at the time of your appointment.



Today's research is tomorrow's care

We all benefit from research. Leicester's Hospitals is a research active Trust so you may find that research is happening when you visit the hospital or your clinic.

If you are interested in finding out how you can become involved in a clinical trial or to find out more about taking part in research, please speak to your clinician or GP.

If you need information in a different language or format, please call the number(s) below or email equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔

على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل
જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર ફોન કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

0116 258 4382 or 0116 250 2959