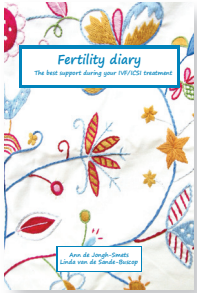


# Book Review



## **Fertility Diary**

By Ann de Jongh-Smets and  
Linda van de Sande-Buscop

The Fertility Diary is set out with a section at the front giving a basic overview of fertility treatment before splitting into six smaller sections allowing for three fresh and three frozen treatments. The basic overview provided good, simple, easy to understand explanations of the various stages and processes along the IVF route. I found that it contained sensible advice regarding lifestyle factors that influence pregnancy chances, for example taking regular exercise and keeping your BMI within a sensible limit. They also give good advice about being prepared for consultations by taking a pen and paper with questions on it. People are always surprised at how little they remember about the specifics of the consultations and the number of questions they forget to ask.

The diary allows for a good record of events that happen, who were there and the feelings being experienced at the time. In subsequent cycles I think this would provide a useful tool for reflection and perhaps as a way of being better prepared, emotionally, if there is a next time.

Peppered throughout the book are sensible little hints and tips about talking to others through treatment, coping during the two week wait, maintaining calm and about involving and understanding the partner's perspective as well. I applaud this as too

often men seem to feel either guilty or superfluous during treatment.

I would recommend that the diary be read through cover-to-cover initially as there is advice throughout that would be useful even from the first cycle. The diary also allows space for people to contemplate the idea that fertility treatment may not be successful for them. While no one likes to dwell on the negative, I think that it is important that couples at least touch on this possibility and explore their feelings, as they stand, on it. The diary is also supportive of counselling which is an important part of the fertility process and too often gets pushed to one side.

On the 'con' side of the review I found the translation at times to be a little stilted and 'clunky' and some people may have difficulties with the syntax. I know I had to re-read a couple of sentences several times to make sure I was interpreting it correctly.

In conclusion, I feel that this diary would be most useful to those people who have a natural inclination towards journaling, those who love a good to-do list or those people with a high anxiety level and also those who have the time available to fill out the diary and reflect on its contents regularly. It won't suit all personalities, but then no book does. What it will do is help keep a record of your fertility journey and the steps you went through on the way. I imagine that some people would find this irreplaceable and others unbearable.

**Trudi Campbell**  
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