

Kimberley's story

First, I want to tell everyone that IVF is not an exact science. It can take several times to get things right. I was thinking before my first time, I was just going to walk in, take what they gave me and it would just work. In fact I wish someone had told me that the first time is more often not successful because they are seeing how you respond to the drugs. Also, the emotional side of the treatment is far harder than the physical side.

The other thing is you always feel like you are waiting but you need to be ready to go because when you go to the clinic, you find out you are starting again in the next week or two. So always be ready to start your next cycle. If you are looking to lose weight or get certain things out of the way, get them done sooner than later.

I did two fresh cycles and one frozen cycle. The first cycle I was taking the drug Buserelin which is used to down-regulate your body. This means you do not have a period so that they can use the drug Gonal-F to stimulate your ovaries to produce as many follicles as possible. If you overstimulate your ovaries, it can be very dangerous and lead to ovarian hyper stimulation syndrome (OHSS).

All of these medications are administered by needles, which was hard for me because I do not like needles. It is not as bad as you think and slowly I got used to giving myself the injections wherever I was - including the bathroom at the Cambridge Arts Theatre. I didn't have many symptoms but the Buserelin made me sleepy. I was not reacting as quickly as they liked to the Gonal-F so my dosage was increased, but this then meant that it was too late to get mature eggs, so the eggs that were collected were not mature enough to proceed with intra cytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI).

The second fresh cycle we took a different approach. Instead of down-regulating me and then stimulating me, they worked with my cycle instead. So I took Pregnyl instead of the Buserelin to work with my cycle, and I took Gonal-F as before but never had the amount increased - even if my follicles did not seem as big as is usually liked. This time we got four eggs (I was a bit heartbroken as other people seem to have closer to ten) but three out of the four fertilized which is higher than average.

My husband likes to remind me that it is better to have a small number of eggs that are good quality than a lot that are of poor quality. So they put one embryo in and froze the other two embryos. In our case, because we did not have very many, they froze one embryo on day two (post-fertilization) and the other on day three. The clinicians typically like embryos to go further along in terms of development because they feel that they can make a better judge of which ones will be successful. They also grade the embryos for quality but even that is not perfect because sometimes the embryos that score the lowest on the grading scale still go on to become healthy babies. Unfortunately we were not successful in this cycle.

Our frozen cycle was relatively simple. They put you on Buserelin so that you do not ovulate. Plus I was on the drug Progynova to help thicken the womb. Before this I also had the endo scratch which is believed to increase the chances of the embryo implanting. They also gave me aspirin to increase circulation and Crinone which is a progesterone gel applied internally. You will find doing IVF, you will do anything they tell you to if it will increase your chances.

They thaw your embryos in one go and two-day embryos have a better chance than five-day ones surviving the thaw. We were so lucky that both of them survived it. Then we had the

two-week wait. The first test had a very light line (but a line!) and so we were asked to take it again the following week and the line came out straight away.

You have to wait until day 35-40 for a scan to see that all is progressing nicely and that it is not an ectopic pregnancy. We made it to this point, so then we were handed over to our GP. I delivered my baby girl in September 2015. I am so grateful for this treatment and can't imagine life without her.