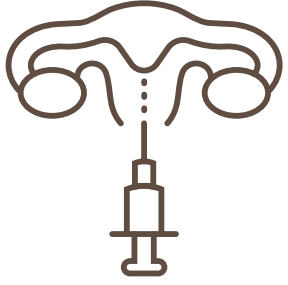


Choosing a fertility clinic

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Choosing a clinic may not seem like a big decision, but infertility is not an easy journey, so making sure you are at a clinic that is a good fit, is worth considering. I know not everyone has 5 clinics to choose from but this guide will outline a few things to consider when choosing a clinic and what to ask your doctor at your consultation!

COST/INSURANCE



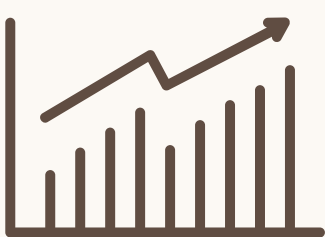
- Out of pocket, treatments can range from free, to over \$30,000.
- If you have insurance coverage, give them a call so you have a better understanding of your coverage.
- Treatments can range from free, to over \$30,000.
- Don't forget to consider diagnostic testing (HSG, Semen Analysis, blood work, etc) and medication when planning financially.
- Financial coordinators can provide resources for grants, loan options, research studies and payment plans.
- If you know that you may need multiple IVF cycles (balanced translocation, genetic testing, severe male factor, etc), cycle packages can save you money!
- Some clinics have discounts for teachers, military and first responders.

PHYSICIAN/PRACTICE



- Think about whether you're more comfortable with a male or female provider or if it doesn't make a difference.
- It's a good idea to ask who you will be seeing for monitoring ultrasounds, blood work and procedures.
- At some clinics, you may only see your doctor at the consult, at others, you see your physician at every monitoring appointment and on your procedure days.
- If you're not seeing your doctor at every appointment, who are you seeing? It could be a PA, nurse practitioner, nurse or ultrasound tech.
- Is a nurse assigned to you or do you work with a team of nurses?
- How do the nurses communicate with you?
- If you know your diagnosis (male factor, patients over 40, egg quality, etc) ask your physician if they have worked with patients like you before!

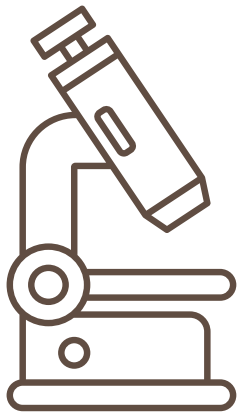
STATS/PREGNANCY RATES



- Pregnancy rates really depend on the person, but the clinic should keep overall pregnancy rates.
- A clinic's statistics can be found through SART.
 - SART can be very overwhelming, so use it with a grain of salt and focus on the stats important to you and in the same patient demographic (age, diagnosis, etc).
- Keep in mind, the best clinics take on the hardest patients!
- If the clinic has it, Unify is a great resource that calculates your personal statistics based on your diagnostic tests.

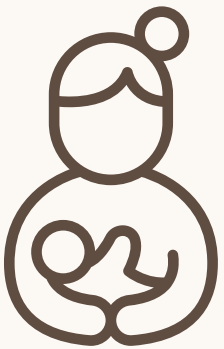
LAB/ACCREDITATIONS

This will be a long one. You all know I am an embryologist, so I find it very important to make sure you consider a clinic's lab when choosing where you will receive care. The lab is where the majority of your money is going when you do IVF. Here are some questions that I believe everyone should ask!



- Is the lab adequately staffed?
 - ASRM created guidelines on how many embryologists should be in a lab depending on how many cycles a year a clinic does. Labs that are understaffed are less likely to follow best practices, meaning the risk of error increases.
- Is the lab CAP accredited and do they report to SART?
 - CAP is a voluntary lab accreditation organization that holds labs to the highest standards.
 - SART requires every treatment cycle and cycle outcome to be reported and generates statistics based on this info.
 - Only labs that are CAP accredited can report to SART.
- Do they keep STATs on their embryologists?
 - This is standard to ensure consistency in the lab.
 - This helps pinpoint any embryologists whose rates may have slipped and are in need of additional training or observation.
- How does the lab communicate with patients?
 - There will be times that the lab needs to communicate with you regarding a test result, sample or lab update. There will also be times where you want to ask the lab a question directly.
 - Is that done via phone, email or portal message? How long is the wait for a response? If the lab doesn't send updates, who does?

OVERALL ATMOSPHERE



- Fertility treatment requires a lot of visits to the clinic.
 - Make sure it's a welcoming environment!
- Consider the location of the clinic in comparison to work or home.
- Do the staff seem happy to be there? Did you see any staff members being mistreated?
- The lab plays a big role in your care, and if there is a lot of turnover or if they're understaffed, they are more likely to make a mistake and no one wants that.
- Happy staff provide the best patient care!
- Do you feel safe and comfortable there? Do you feel like a number or do you feel like your case is being handled with care?

CLINIC RED FLAGS



- Physician hasn't reviewed your medical history before your consult
- You feel that they haven't taken the time to listen or are dismissive of your concerns
- They get offended when you ask for a referral for a second opinion
- They are unable or unwilling to answer your questions
- Some questions may require some additional research or outsourcing, but they should be willing to do that!
- There is a lot of turnover at the clinic/lab
- The lab is not CAP accredited
- You have difficulty getting your questions answered and communication is lacking
- They've had a tank failure, lab mix up, or lawsuit

Look, perfection is impossible, but some things are unacceptable and clinics should be transparent about their shortcomings. At the end of the day remember, you have CHOICES regarding your care. Whether that be with the clinic you choose, the physician or your treatment plan. It all comes down to what you value the most during your journey. Not all of these topics may be something you care about. The goal is to make you think about what you do care about! Ask the hard questions because you are investing a lot of time, emotions and money on your care.



FOR MORE DETAILS YOU MAY
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aleasetheembryologist@gmail.com

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