

# Non IV Treatment Option

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**I**nfertility, defined as the absence of pregnancy in women actively trying to conceive for one year, if under the age of 35, or 6 months if over the age of 35, affects 1 in 6 couples.

A third of couples with infertility will have a female cause, one third will have a male cause and about 20 percent has both male and female causes. In addition, about 20 percent of the time no underlying cause is ever discovered. Patients with infertility know that treatment can be very involved and stressful. Although IVF is one treatment option, there are several other options commonly used to treat infertility that are less invasive than IVF and still provide patients with a good chance of becoming pregnant. These options require that the female patient has at least one open fallopian tube and, if there is a male partner, enough sperm is being produced to fertilize an egg.

Treatment options depend on the underlying cause or causes of infertility. One common cause of infertility is anovulation, which happens when a woman does not make an egg each month. This can be caused by a specific hormone problem called polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS). Some women with normal hormone levels do not ovulate or only ovulate occasionally, while others have mild ovarian aging. All of these women can benefit from medication used to stimulate the ovaries to make eggs. This process is called ovulation induction.

Some women do ovulate normally each month and medications can be given to these women to ovulate multiple eggs in a

cycle which increases pregnancy rates while increasing the risk of multiples. This process is called superovulation. Superovulation increases pregnancy rates, as well as, the risk for more than one baby.

## Medications

Medications for ovulation induction can be taken by mouth or through daily subcutaneous (under the skin) injections in the abdomen. Oral medications include Femara (letrozole) and Clomid (also sold as Serophene.) These oral medications are prescribed to improve the chances of an egg releasing (ovulation induction) or to increase the number of eggs which ovulate each cycle (superovulation). The most common side effects are headache, fatigue, hot flashes and breast tenderness. For many years, Clomid has been the drug of choice for either ovulation induction or superovulation. Recently, Femara has become an alternative to Clomid for many women, including women with PCOS, women

with thin uterine lining, or women who have taken Clomid without becoming pregnant. Femara has shown to work better than Clomid in women with PCOS. There is a 5-10% chance of twins when a patient gets pregnant using these medications

Fertility medications that are taken through daily injections are called gonadotropins (medication such as Gonal F and Follistim). Gonadotropins are typically more efficient in inducing ovulation, when compared to Clomid and Femara. These medications typically provide patients with higher pregnancy rates. However, gonadotropins are much more expensive and require closer observation and monitoring (ultrasounds and bloodwork). In addition, the risk for multiple pregnancies such as twins or more is much higher with gonadotropins than with Clomid or Femara.

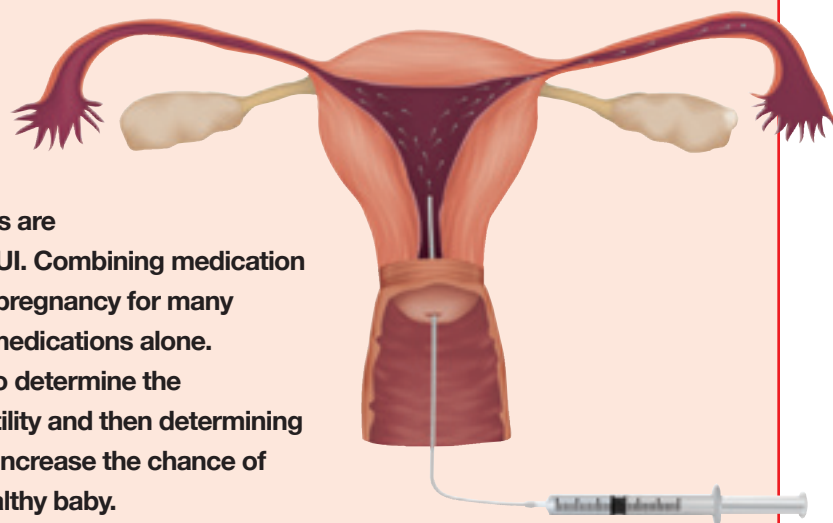
For more information on infertility and treatment options, visit our website at [www.rmapa.com](http://www.rmapa.com). **WJ**

## Intrauterine Insemination (IUI)

**Intrauterine inseminations involves taking a fresh sperm sample, separating the sperm from other cells, placing the sperm in a small catheter that is threaded into a woman's uterus. The sperm then swim up the fallopian tubes to fertilize the egg. IUI alone only makes sense if there is a problem getting the sperm to uterus.**

**Fertility medications help women ovulate, but pregnancy rates are much higher when combined with IUI. Combining medication with IUI can double the chances of pregnancy for many couples; when compared to using medications alone.**

**Working with a fertility doctor, to determine the underlying cause or causes of infertility and then determining the best treatment option, will help increase the chance of having a healthy pregnancy and healthy baby.**



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