

What is all the stress about?



Stress and anxiety are natural responses when we are frightened or threatened in any way. Fertility problems and IVF treatment can represent a threat to your control, future dreams, self-esteem, intimate relationships with your partner or other relationships. No wonder you feel anxious.

This leaflet from our Patient Support Team gives some practical guidance on responding to situations where stress and anxiety have become obstacles to effective living.

What are the symptoms?

Stress and anxiety can present in many ways.

- Physical symptoms, including muscle tension, hyperventilation, palpitations, nausea or sleeplessness.

- Changes to thinking patterns, including chaotic thought, irrationality, extreme sensitivity or bewilderment.
- Behavioural changes, including introversion, aggression, needy or clinging behaviour or loss of confidence.
- Reversion to old ways of coping, including withdrawal, emotionality or dependence.

Coping Strategies

Stress and anxiety tend to feed on themselves, particularly in couple relationships. Often there is no one cure, but interrupting the cycle by doing something different can offer possibilities for change. Holding on to the way we manage a situation ensures that nothing will change.

Taking on an experimental mindset may allow you to try out some new behaviours. Here we outline some strategies to help you to reduce the effects of stress and anxiety in your day-to-day life.

For more information

Rotunda IVF can provide you with general information by phone or through our website. Should you wish to make an appointment to talk to one of our fertility specialists, please call in, contact us by phone or send us an email.

Contact details

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Opening Hours

Mon-Fri 8am - 4pm
Sat 9am-12pm
Sun By appointment only

Managing Stress

What you can do...

Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical exercise• Yoga/meditation/relaxation techniques/massage• Herbal remedies (but please inform your IVF Fertility Specialist of the details when you commence any such therapies)• Sleeping (either more or less)• Crying or laughing
Behavioural	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Find achievable projects at home or work that make you feel productive• Plan with your partner to look out for each other at social events - ask how the other is feeling before you arrive and during the event• Plan other activities to look forward to• Join a support group/chat room• Review your work hours (refer to our brochure entitled Balancing Work and IVF)• Take breaks from treatment, even if just for a month or two• Shorten visits to newborns, children's birthday parties, etc. (Instead, deliver a cooked meal or write a letter.)• Share 'doing' activities (like movies or sports) rather than 'talking' activities, with friends• Seek out other community groups that focus on interests other than children, for example, a book club• Educate friends and family who are interested and keen to support you• Identify your underlying feelings, for example, anger generally masks fear and/or helplessness and bitterness masks pain
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share your true feelings with your partner• Accept that your partner may be emotionally different to you• Discuss with your partner what helps and what doesn't• Adopt a 'best friend' attitude to yourself, for example, accepting and forgiving rather than blaming yourself• Share your feelings with someone else• Identify people who can and will hang in there with you (you may be surprised)• Write down your thoughts and feelings in a diary or journal• See a good GP or talk to the Rotunda IVF Patient Support Team, if you are worried about persistent anxiety, depression or other symptoms
Cognitive/ Intellectual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remember that you and your partner may not always be on the same page regarding how you think or feel about your treatment• Give each other as much time as you can to consider new ideas - attitude changes take time• Modify your expectations of friends and family• Distinguish between the things you can and can't influence• Learn about the treatment, ask lots of questions to help you feel more in control• Develop a good working relationship with your doctor/nurse/counsellor• Try not to place too much importance on a particular cycle• Refuse to accept unfair judgements about you or your treatment choices• Try to visualise many varied futures - do not just focus on one - discussing a Plan B won't reduce the chances of your Plan A working out.

Our Patient Support Team can arrange to meet you early in the morning, before work - if that suits you.