

Balancing Work and IVF



Whatever works for you.

There is no perfect formula and whatever works for you is best. While many women work full-time as they undertake IVF treatment, some choose to work part-time and others do not work at all.

The most important thing is to find the balance that best suits you. The key is working out what you (and your support network) can reasonably manage.

Can you fit it all in?

Your IVF treatment regime requires a considerable time commitment from you. Now is probably not the ideal time for taking on extra work, responsibilities or study. Perhaps re-examine the division of household chores. Maybe you need extra help at this time?

Put yourself first

Whether you decide to continue working at full tilt, or whether you decide to reduce hours or take time out, the most important thing is to prioritise yourself.

People often attempt to put work before their own needs and this can lead to over-stretching, stress and in some cases, exhaustion. You need to stay healthy and fit so you can continue with treatment and perform well in your job. It's all about balance.

Aim to have some fun. Ensure you eat well, sleep, exercise, allow down-time with your friends and family, and of course your partner.

Resolve to schedule time for conversations with our Patient Support Team, as well as, your medical appointments and other complementary therapies.

Looking after yourself will help you function more effectively in all aspects of your life.

To tell or not to tell

This is a very individual decision for which you will need to carefully weigh up the pros and cons. Your choice will depend on your own personality, the nature of your relationships at work and how you feel you can deal with people on a daily basis.

Some people prefer not to disclose any information at all in their workplace. Others feel the pressure of keeping their treatment a secret and tell their manager only. Perhaps you will also choose to share news of your treatment with a few close colleagues. Possibly you'll feel like telling the world.

Be very careful. Ask yourself: Can I trust my boss or colleagues to keep this information confidential? Will it be easier for me if they know about my situation? Or will it be harder?

Being open may bring you added emotional support. However, you can't be sure how others will respond. If you are unsure about telling your colleagues, perhaps test the waters first. Impart a small amount of information and gauge how they respond and how you feel. If it's positive, you can choose to tell more. If not, you have your answer.

Educate them

If you do decide to be open at work, you will likely be fielding all sorts of questions about the more detailed aspects of IVF. Many people's knowledge of IVF is limited to what they have learned from media reports.

Be clear that your personal information is confidential. Take the opportunity to let people know how you would prefer them to treat you. They may be very uncomfortable about approaching the subject of your IVF treatment. Do you want them to ask how treatment is going or would you prefer to raise the topic when you wish to discuss it?

Communicate, communicate

Should you choose to be open with your employer, communicating with them regularly can benefit you both immensely. The time you need off work is probably a lot less than your employer expected.

Whenever possible, clinic appointments are scheduled around your work commitments. Still, there will be days when you need to take some time off work, for the egg collection procedure, for example.

Provide as much warning as possible of the dates you may be absent. If you have any important work dates or travel commitments, then inform your Rotunda IVF team at the beginning of your treatment cycle. Perhaps your medication can be modified to suit your timetable. If not, ask the nursing staff for approximate dates and times to help with planning your work schedule.

Your employer is more likely to be supportive if you demonstrate that you will always try to fit your treatment around your work commitments.

The coffee dock chatter

The work coffee dock is one place where separating your personal and work lives is likely to be a challenge. Working with pregnant colleagues or sitting through endless conversations about colleagues children can be very difficult.

You may be asked intrusive questions that you don't want to answer such as: When are you going to start a family? Prepare yourself for these situations. Practice changing the topic or giving 'off the cuff' answers. Allow yourself to make a hasty exit if you need to. Change the scenery - go for a walk outside or lunch with a

supportive friend. It's not avoidance - it's being kind to yourself.

Where have you been?

You have decided not to tell your colleagues about IVF which means that you will also need to practice explaining your absence to well-intentioned colleagues. Remember, just because someone asks you a question, it doesn't mean that you have to answer it fully. You might say you had an appointment and leave it at that. If they persist, you can say that it's private and you'd rather not discuss it. Remember - it's your choice.

Are you being a good boss to yourself?

Some people are harder on themselves than any boss or colleague could ever be. Does that sound like you? Are you working late, not taking holidays or are you taking on extra responsibilities? Sometimes you need to be kind to yourself - switch off the computer and go home! Work will still be there the next day. If you can arrange it, a holiday or an extended weekend break with your partner, or friends, might be just what you need to lift your spirits.

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.

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Opening Hours

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