

Fact Sheet

Adjuvant Therapy – Viagra



What is an adjuvant therapy?

Adjuvant therapy, also known as adjunct therapy, or 'add-ons', comprises a group of medical interventions that are given alone or in combination in addition to the standard IVF treatment. It is important to note that for many of these add-ons there is little or no evidence of their effectiveness to improve live birth rates. Nevertheless, your fertility specialist may decide to offer these treatments to individualise the care of your IVF treatment.

Monash IVF has made a number of fact sheets on add-ons to help you make a fully informed decision. Before you agree, you will need to weigh the evidence that this add-on may help you against the side effects it may cause, the known risks to mother and baby, as well as the extra costs.

Who may recommend an adjuvant therapy to you?

Your Fertility Specialist will discuss and recommend any adjuvant therapies they feel may be appropriate for the treatment you are going to undertake. If recommended, these therapies will be individualised to compliment your fertility treatment cycle.

What is Viagra normally used for?

Viagra® (Sildenafil) is used to treat male sexual function problems (impotence, failure to achieve or maintain an erection). In combination with sexual stimulation, sildenafil works by increasing blood flow to the penis to help a man get and keep an erection.

Why is Viagra used in IVF?

Viagra® has been used in IVF patients with the hope to stimulate the blood flow to the uterus to improve implantation of the embryo.

Will using Viagra increase my chance of success?

There is conflicting evidence of very poor quality on whether it can increase the thickness of the endometrium. There is no evidence that sildenafil increases implantation rates, pregnancy rates or live birth rates.

Is the use of Viagra in IVF an off-label prescription?

Yes, Viagra® is an off-label prescription. This means its use in IVF is not an authorised use of this medication.

Are there any side effects and risks with using Viagra?

Common side effects can include:

- headache
- flushing
- upset stomach
- abnormal vision, such as changes in color vision and blurred vision
- stuffy or runny nose
- back pain
- muscle pain
- nausea
- dizziness
- rash

In very rare cases, sildenafil use can lead to nonarteritic anterior ischemic optic neuropathy, or damage to the optic nerve.

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Are there any risks to the safety of a baby by using Viagra during pregnancy?

Sildenafil is a Pregnancy Category B2 drug. This means it has been taken by only a limited number of pregnant women and women of childbearing age, without an increase in the frequency of malformation or other direct or indirect harmful effects on the human fetus having been observed.

What are the costs?

Your Fertility Specialist will provide you with a prescription to obtain any medications which have been prescribed to you. The cost of these medications may vary from pharmacy to pharmacy, however these costs are in addition to your treatment cycle.

What do I do if I have more questions?

If you have any questions or require further information please contact your Fertility Specialist