



HIV-Positive Fertility Options

INTRODUCTION

Repromed fully supports people living with HIV through their journey to pregnancy. All forms of fertility treatment are now a safe option for those with HIV taking antiretroviral medication, who are wanting to try for a baby. We have been working closely with the New Zealand AIDS Foundation, Body Positive and Positive Women Inc. on an exciting initiative for people living with HIV who are wanting to have a baby or donate sperm to help others.

In 2016, Repromed was NZ's first healthcare company to be awarded the Rainbow Tick for our inclusive fertility care to LGBTTTQIA+ clients. For us, it is our responsibility to help educate NZ about the advancements in fertility treatment and reduce the historical stigma for those living with HIV. We are here to support our LGBTTTQIA+ community and welcome any enquiries about HIV positive fertility options.

GETTING PREGNANT WHEN LIVING WITH HIV

It is now well established that people living with HIV who are taking antiretroviral drugs, can achieve an undetectable viral load (<200 copies) in their blood and therefore have a zero chance of transmitting the virus to their sexual partners and children. Timed intercourse and Ovulation Induction (OI) is now a safe option, as well as more advanced forms of treatment including IUI and IVF.

DONATING SPERM WHEN LIVING WITH HIV

People living with HIV, who have an undetectable viral load, are now able to become 'known' sperm donors. A 'known' or personal sperm donor is where the sperm donor is a friend, relative or acquaintance of the person trying to get pregnant. This opens up options for those who are needing a sperm donor. If you know someone living with HIV who is taking antiretroviral drugs and willing to donate their sperm, Repromed can help facilitate their fertility treatment.

HOW SAFE IS IT?

Repromed is committed to the safe provision of treatments for HIV-positive individuals and donor sperm recipients.

It is now known to be completely safe for HIV-positive people who are on antiretroviral medication and have an undetectable viral load to use their sperm for both a natural insemination or for use in Assisted reproduction (intrauterine insemination or IVF). In this situation, Undetectable = Untransmittable, and there is no risk of the virus passing on to either the recipient or the child.

If an HIV-positive donor does not have an undetectable viral load, it is still possible for a low risk insemination to occur through sperm washing.

At Repromed, as part of the process of Assisted reproduction, all sperm (whether

from HIV-positive or HIV-negative donors) is washed several times to maximise the chance of fertilisation.

WHAT EVIDENCE IS THERE?

The widespread use of antiretroviral drugs for HIV-positive people has dramatically changed the fertility advice published by the international Centre for Disease Control (CDC). In the 1990s, getting pregnant whilst HIV-positive was strongly discouraged and even as recent as 2017, the published advice was still to use precautions of advanced fertility services, which for many people was cost prohibitive.

There is now a wealth of published studies that show zero transmission of HIV in people suppressed with antiretroviral drugs¹. The two large PARTNER^{2,3} studies published in 2016, report no HIV transmissions in more than 58,000 condomless sexual acts when the positive person's viral load was undetectable.

More specifically, data relating to fertility treatment⁴ has demonstrated that not one single case of HIV transmission to an HIV-negative recipient, or foetus, has occurred in 11,500 cases of washed sperm intrauterine inseminations or IVF in more than 4,000 cycles. This collective evidence has now called for more clinical acceptance around the safety of both unassisted and assisted methods of getting pregnant when living with HIV⁵.

References:

1. Kawwass JF *et al*. 2017 Strategies for preventing HIV infection among HIV-uninfected women attempting conception with HIV-infected men—United States Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2017;66:554-7.
2. Cohen, M. *et al* 2016 Antiretroviral Therapy for the Prevention of HIV-1 Transmission. N Engl J Med. 375, 830-839.
3. Rodger, A.J. *et al* 2016 Sexual Activity Without Condoms and Risk of HIV Transmission in Serodifferent Couples When the HIV-Positive Partner Is Using Suppressive Antiretroviral Therapy. JAMA. 316(2), 171-181
4. Zafert M *et al* 2016 Effectiveness of semen washing to prevent human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) transmission and assist pregnancy in HIV-discordant couples: a systematic review. ...Fertility and Sterility. Volume 105, Issue 3
5. Bhatt, S.J. *et al*. 2020 Undetectable equals untransmittable (U = U): implications for preconception counseling for human immunodeficiency virus serodiscordant couples. American Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology, Volume 222, Issue 1, 53.e1 - 53.e4

WE'RE
HERE TO
HELP

Repromed are delighted to be working with NZAF, Body Positive and Positive Women Inc. to help educate NZ'ers on the significant reproductive advances which benefits our Rainbow community in such a positive way.

We welcome any queries regarding trying to get pregnant when living with HIV, or if you want to know more about fertility treatment with a HIV positive known sperm donor - call 0800 483 105 or email info@repromed.co.nz