
The internet: a discrete and private infertility resource

In March 2000 former President Bill Clinton stood in village health centre in rural India, where he watched a woman enter, call up a web page on the village computer, and get information on how to care for her baby. It is almost certain, officials told Clinton, that both the woman and her child would enjoy better health and a greater life expectancy, thanks to the Internet.

Almost a decade later a survey of US doctors showed that 85 per cent regularly found patients bringing internet health information to an appointment. And while medical professionals may remain sceptical as to the accuracy of cyber self-diagnosis, a study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* reported that self-diagnosis from Google searches were accurate in 57 per cent of the cases analysed.

But for many patients, concerned about their fertility, access to the Internet has transformed their lives. Infertility is an emotive subject that many couples find difficult to discuss, even with each other, while friends and family often feel it is tactless to intervene or advise. While a woman might talk to a close friend, for men it's not a subject you raise with your mates – let alone with your GP. And if one half of a couple won't talk to the doctor, it's infertility stalemate.

Enter Internet diagnosis. Over the past five years, there has been an explosion of interest in on-line fertility issues. Google infertility treatments and you get 2.7 million hits in less than a quarter of a second; with pages devoted to causes of infertility, IVF and clinical treatments. And while the internet is no substitute for a GP's knowledge and experience, it is private and the better sites offer real and valuable information.

And while web visitors remain anonymous and can't be identified, regular analysis of traffic on our own website, www.originfertilitycare.com give us a vivid picture of what patients want to know and the information they read, download and print. But though the internet is a liberating

global library, it can still confuse and mislead. Too often couples assume that immediate recourse to IVF, with the associated cost of invasive treatment, is the natural and inevitable response to infertility difficulties.

To believe that would be a mistake. The reality is that there are a number of relatively simple but vitally important steps couples can take to explore their own and their partner's fertility. At Origin we offer two diagnostic tests that are quick, confidential and accurate pointers to the sources of infertility.

For the man, semen analysis can often identify a problem and point to treatment without the need for further tests. For women, a simple blood test measures the level of Anti-Mullerian Hormone (AMH) which indicates if the ovaries are still releasing eggs. AMH levels can be measured at any time of the month and, although available in GB, Origin is currently the only clinic offering this test in Northern Ireland.

Both tests are carried out as a matter of routine before a couple's first consultation with one of Origin's fertility professionals, although a semen analysis can be arranged on its own. Origin's Belfast-based embryologists travel monthly to clinics in Newry and Londonderry to undertake semen analysis on an appointment basis. Costing £95, the result will be available to you and/or your referring doctor within 7 days of your appointment.

With Origin's new on-line booking system, you can book your appointment from the privacy of

your own keyboard at www.originfertilitycare.com/semenanalysis.

And even better news, if you would like to discuss the semen analysis result with a fertility practitioner in person or as a couple or would like to explore your fertility further, Origin is offering a limited number of free Fertility Consultations with one of their specialists.

You can still be referred by your GP for a semen analysis or contact the clinic of your choice to make your appointment if you prefer.

Origin's new, on-line semen analysis booking service is a unique opportunity to take control of your future. So...Why wait? Contact us today and make the internet work for your fertility.

To book online:
**[www.originfertilitycare.com/
semenanalysis](http://www.originfertilitycare.com/semenanalysis)**

*For more information on Origin
Fertility Care's semen analysis
service contact:*

Origin Fertility Care
on 028 9076 1713
or visit **www.originfertilitycare.com**
North West Independent Hospital
on 028 7776 3090
Newry Clinic
on 028 3025 7708