



Boston IVF

Gestational Carrier

Handbook

Boston IVF
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(781) 434-6500

Boston IVF Handbook

Created for Gestational Carriers

Introduction:

This handbook was created to help you understand and navigate the process of participating in a Gestational Carrier Cycle here at Boston IVF. There are many steps, including physician visits, medical tests, as well as legal consultations, to prepare for a Gestational Carrier Cycle. The medical team at Boston IVF is here to help you understand and complete the required tests.

For you as the Gestational Carrier, there are 6 distinct steps:

1. Being matched with the couple you are going to be working with, (referred to at Boston IVF as the Intended Parents)
2. Filling out the Boston IVF questionnaire
3. Forwarding medical records from previous pregnancies and deliveries
4. Medical and psychological screening for you and the Intended Parents
5. Completion of a Legal Contract between you and the Intended Parents
6. Cycle Coordination

The Gestational Carrier Process: Step by Step

The Matching Process

By the time you are reading this handbook, you have already received and exchanged information with the Intended Parents. You may be working with an agency, or you may be a close friend or family member. Whether you are working with an agency, or you are a Carrier who is known to the couple, your screening process will be the same.

Filling Out a Boston IVF Questionnaire

Now that you have been matched with the Intended Parents, it is our responsibility at Boston IVF to insure that you are medically, and psychologically, able to carry a pregnancy as a Gestational Carrier. To begin this process, we may ask that you fill out a questionnaire detailing your personal, and family, medical history. One of the Third Party Reproductive Nurse Coordinators will call you if we have questions about an answer you have given. If you fill out a questionnaire for the agency, you may not have to fill one out for Boston IVF.

Forwarding Medical Records

Your medical records are protected by law; no one has the right to them without your permission. Because of this protective law, we ask that you contact any offices or hospitals that have your medical records, sign whatever release form they require, and have a copy of your records released to you. Boston IVF requires you to obtain all labor and delivery records. Please make a copy of these records for your files, and forward a copy to the Third Party Reproduction Department at Boston IVF. We are located in the Waltham office. If you are working with an agency, they will collect your medical records and forward them to Boston IVF.

A member of the medical team will review your records and make a determination whether any of the tests or exams you have had pertains to the tests and exams we require of Gestational Carriers at Boston IVF.

Medical and Psychological Screening:

There are a number of tests that you, the Gestational Carrier and your partner, as well as the Intended Parents, are required to have before coordinating the cycle. All Gestational Carriers, partner, and Intended Parents must come to Boston IVF for Medical and psychological screening. This involves 2-3 days of appointments. The Third Party Reproduction Department at Boston IVF will inform all those involved what needs to be done, and assist in scheduling the appointments.

Your medical screening will be done by your Boston IVF physician. During this appointment, the physician will meet with the Gestational Carrier and Intended Parent couples, each separately, then all together. All parties must sign the required consent forms at these visits.

The medical screening includes blood and urine testing for infectious diseases. These tests are required by the Federal Government within a 6 month period of the cycle.

As a Gestational Carrier, you will also have a physical exam at Boston IVF. During this exam, you will have a Sonohysterogram to evaluate the uterus for pregnancy.

Pap smears and mammograms are required to be up to date with evidence of medical follow up, if needed, for the Gestational Carrier and the Intended Mother. The lab reports for the pap smear and the mammogram should be forwarded to Boston IVF.

Another part of the medical appointments will be a meeting with Gestational Carrier couple and the Intended Parent couple with the nurse from the Third Party Reproductive Team to review the process of coordinating your cycle and give an injection lesson. Medication mixing and administration, as well as possible side effects will be addressed.

The psychological screening is a large and very important part of the evaluation. As a Gestational Carrier, you will meet with a Clinical Psychologist and a licensed Social Worker, with your partner, and also with the Intended Parents. During this meeting communication and understanding among all those involved in the cycle, will be addressed.

As the Gestational Carrier, you will also be required to take a series of Psychological testing, administered by the psychologist as a part of the psychological evaluation.

We know that many Gestational Carriers have young children; however, we ask

that you make arrangements for child care either in your home, or outside of Boston IVF, wherever you are staying. This is an important visit filled with a large amount of information, which requires full attention from all who are involved. Also, while we love children, our patients are particularly sensitive to the presence of children due to the nature of our practice. We thank you in advance for your respectful compliance.

Completion of a Legal Contract

It is a requirement that there be a legal contract executed by a lawyer that specializes in Reproductive law, in place between the Gestational Carrier and the Intended Parents before proceeding with a cycle at Boston IVF. This is required whether a Carrier is a family member or friend, or if they were recruited by an agency. Although Boston IVF does not want a copy of the contract, we do require a letter from the reproductive lawyer stating the contract has been signed.

Cycle Coordination

The Nurse Coordinator on the Third Party Reproductive team at Boston IVF will be responsible for coordinating you and the Intended Mother's medicated cycle. The easiest way to begin cycle coordination is to start both the Carrier and the Intended Mother on birth control pills. These are typically started 1-2 months before the anticipated cycle. Please contact the Nurse coordinators at Boston IVF with the start of your menstrual cycle, and they will call in a prescription for you.

There are many different protocols used for a Gestational Carrier cycle, and your Boston IVF physician will choose the protocol that's best for you. No matter what your particular protocol is, you will receive medications to keep you from ovulating, as well as medications to prepare your uterus to receive an embryo. These medications build up the uterine lining. You may need to have some blood tests and ultrasound appointments during the cycle. On the day of each test, you will receive a call from a nurse coordinator with your results and instructions for proceeding.

While you are taking your medications, the Intended mother will be undergoing a medicated cycle to stimulate her ovaries to produce follicles. Eventually she will be given a date and time to take a medication to release the eggs, and a subsequent date and time to have the eggs retrieved at Boston IVF. You will also receive this information, with medication instructions. Within a day or two, you will be given a date and time to come into Boston IVF for an embryo transfer. Embryo transfers are done three days after the eggs are retrieved and fertilized.

You will have a pregnancy test either at Boston IVF, or at your own physician's office 11 days after the embryo transfer.

If you are pregnant, you will have an initial 6 and ½ week ultrasound, and a follow-up consult with your Boston IVF physician. If the ultrasound shows a healthy pregnancy, you will then be cared for by your OB/ GYN through your delivery. It is very important that you continue all medications prescribed by Boston IVF through the first trimester, unless otherwise instructed by your Boston IVF physician.

To prepare your body for a pregnancy, we ask that you read and follow this list:

1. Quit smoking
2. Discontinue alcohol consumption
3. Take a prenatal vitamin daily
4. Limit caffeine intake to one cup or less a day
5. Choose low-impact exercise over high-impact activities – walking and swimming are recommended
6. Wear supportive shoes and bra when exercising, and drink plenty of non-caffeinated fluids
7. Avoid changing cat litter
8. Wear gloves while gardening
9. Limit to one serving per week, or avoid altogether, fish such as tuna, salmon, swordfish, and shark due to its high mercury content
10. Avoid raw meat and raw shellfish
11. Wash hands and boards carefully after preparing raw meat
12. Avoid hot tubs and Jacuzzis
13. Consult the nurse coordinators at Boston IVF before taking any prescription or over the counter preparations during your treatment cycle

Summary

All of us at Boston IVF hope that your experience as a Gestational Carrier is a positive one, and we wish you luck in your upcoming cycle.

Contact Information:

Gestational Carrier Program

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