



COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) PATIENT UPDATE #4

26 March 2020

Dear Valued Repromed Patient,

I hope this finds you both physically and emotionally well during this time of change.

You may be aware that the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, announced that from midnight on the 25th of March 2020, services to all elective surgeries other than category 1 and urgent category 2 cases will be disrupted.

We at Repromed understand that this measure is important to ensuring both the health and wellbeing of patients and healthcare workers, as well as ensuring that Australia's healthcare system is best placed to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

I also recognise that this is a very challenging time for people who require fertility treatment – please rest assured that we will continue to do everything we can to provide you with advice, support and treatment, where we are able to do so safely.

Also please note that treatment will only be provided if you are well and have not travelled overseas to any country, or had close contact with someone who has positively tested for COVID-19 within the last 14 days.

Below you will find some specifics on how this latest government announcement may affect your fertility journey. As always if you are in doubt, I encourage you to contact us directly to discuss your specific circumstances.

What does this government announcement mean for me in practical terms?

- Repromed is able to continue providing IVF treatment for patients who have already commenced treatment as of the 25th of March 2020. The definition of 'commenced treatment' includes any patient who has;
 - registered Day 1 of your period with our Book-On team by the 25th of March
 - been informed by your Fertility Doctor that your treatment cycle will be completed (including embryo transfer) by the 18th of April

Are all fertility treatments impacted by this government restriction on elective surgeries?

- Only IVF cycles are affected as patients need to visit our day surgery unit for their egg collections.
- Ovulation Inductions (*see below if you are a country patient*), Intrauterine Inseminations, Frozen Embryo Transfers are all able to continue.

Is anyone exempt from this government restriction on elective surgeries?

- If you have a medical requirement that a postponement in treatment is not advisable (eg patients commencing oncology treatment) then you can commence or continue to have treatment after the 25th of March 2020.

I'm fit and healthy, should I continue with my IVF treatment in light of this elective surgery restriction?

- We suggest that if you are young, and have a good ovarian reserve level that you consider postponing your treatment plans by 1 month. This will help to reduce the impact on the health



system and our staff if you happen to fall ill (with COVID-19 etc) during treatment.

What if I'm not sure about starting or continuing with treatment?

- We suggest that if you are in any way hesitant to either start or continue with your treatment plan, to firstly discuss this with your Fertility Doctor. They will take your particular medical circumstances into account and be able to guide you. If there is no medical urgency for you to start treatment we would suggest you postpone for 1 month.
- If you have any significant health conditions (chronic lung/cardiac issues, hypertension, diabetes) or co-morbidity (one or more additional conditions) we suggest you postpone your treatment for 1 month due to the increased risk and health complications that can arise if you contract Covid-19 during treatment.
- If you are already on immune suppressing medication for the management of a chronic medical disease (eg autoimmune diseases) we suggest you postpone your treatment for 1 month due to the increased risk and health complications that can arise if you contract Covid-19 during treatment.

What if I need to postpone my treatment due to COVID-19?

- If your current cycle needs to be postponed as a result of COVID-19, you will not be charged any out of pocket fees for this cancelled cycle.
- If you have started your cycle but are unable to proceed to egg pickup, you will not be charged any out of pocket fees for this cancelled cycle.

If I am a country patient, can I start fertility treatment?

- Regional patients who cannot easily reach our Dulwich or Darwin clinics should consider postponing treatment for 1 month. We feel this is an appropriate measure as Repromed cannot guarantee blood and scan services in regional areas. We are also taking the Government's advice to limit personal travel where possible.
- We suggest that if you are a country patient and in any way hesitant to either start or continue with your treatment plan, to firstly discuss this with your Fertility Doctor.

What if I have previously had treatment with immune suppressing medication, should I still continue my IVF cycle?

- In this instance we are recommending that if you have had immune suppressing medication (eg. Prednisolone, Intralipid therapy) in your previous cycle that you postpone treatment for 1 month. There is some medical evidence that COVID-19 can increase the side effects of these medications.

What if I have had OHSS previously, should I still continue with my IVF cycle?

- In this instance we are recommending that if you have a high chance of developing OHSS (Ovarian Hyper Stimulation Syndrome) that you postpone treatment for 1 month. There is some medical evidence that COVID-19 can increase the side effects of OHSS in some patients.

What if I am a Frontline Health Care Worker (nurses, doctors), First Responder (police, ambulance officer), Teacher and work in similar professions? Can I start treatment?



- Firstly I would like to extend my personal note of thanks to you. The work you are doing within our community to keep us safe and functioning is invaluable. However your particular line of work places you in a higher risk category for contracting COVID-19. As such we are recommending that if you have no cause or medical requirement that you consider postponing your treatment by 1 month.

We are booked in for an AMH and Semen Analysis. Can we still have these tests?

- Yes, you can still have them and a phone consultation with your Fertility Doctor to review your results.
- Your blood sample will be taken at our Dulwich clinic as normal or at an approved external collection site for Darwin patients.
- Regarding the semen sample, this will be produced off site (we will advise the details when your appointment is made).
- Please note that it has been long recognised that a high fever, common with severe COVID-19 infections, can negatively impact on sperm quality. As such it is important that men who get a fever take paracetamol to minimise any increase in their body temperature.
 - Furthermore, we would suggest you consider postponing your analysis by at least a month to allow sperm quality to improve.

Can I still have my scans at Repromed?

- Yes, we are continuing to offer our scanning services for patients.

Are my frozen eggs, sperm and embryos safe?

- Yes. We would like to reassure all patients who have eggs, sperm or embryos in storage that we will continue to provide the greatest care in monitoring these until our services resume.

If after reflecting on the above advice you are still wishing to commence fertility treatment, I invite you to contact either your treating doctor or myself ASAP to discuss your particular circumstances.

I would also recommend that you visit our website <https://repromed.com.au/covid-19-faq/> as we are constantly updating this page with information that you may find useful and which may help to alleviate any uncertainty during this time.

Please know that as always Repromed is here to help you with your fertility journey. We are continually reviewing the medical evidence relating to COVID-19 and will keep you updated with any new developments and how they relate to your fertility treatment.

Thank you for your understanding during this difficult time.

Stay safe,

Professor Kelton Tremellen
Medical Director