



COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS) PATIENT UPDATE #5

24 April 2020

Dear Valued Repromed Patient,

We hope you were as delighted by the Prime Minister, Scott Morrison's and Federal Minister for Health, Greg Hunt's announcements earlier this week regarding the lifting of restrictions on IVF after this ANZAC Day weekend, as we were.

This announcement has come about as a result of the low incidence of COVID-19 across Australia and the lower than expected demand on our hospital systems. This is certainly encouraging news and reflective of the positive way we as a society have responded to this global pandemic.

Below you will find 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.

Does this announcement mean I can now start my IVF treatment?

- Yes, if you were considering commencing IVF and have a treatment plan in place with your Fertility Doctor, you are able to recommence with your treatment plan. On the first day of your period you will need to contact us to 'Book On'.
- If you were considering IVF as an option but had not arranged a formal treatment plan with your Fertility Doctor, I encourage you to contact us to discuss a path forward.

Can I access the Donor Program now?

- Yes, our local donor egg program has now recommenced.
- The Manor IVF Frozen Egg Bank Program is still on hold as the Ukrainian Government are still blocking the export of eggs due to the current pandemic.
- Patients using donor sperm through the CCB Sperm Donor Program are able to recommence treatment as all available donors produced their samples prior to the onset of the Covid-19 outbreak in the United States.
- Repromed's locally recruited sperm donors program is still on hold. I expect this to be the case for another 2-4 weeks. New serology (blood antibody) tests will be coming onto the market in the next month or so and we will be using these tests to ensure that sperm donors did not have Covid-19 when they donated. While some small studies have suggested that sperm do not carry the Covid-19 virus, this is a safety precaution we feel is still warranted.
- Patients using Repromed for their surrogacy arrangements are able to recommence with treatment.

What procedures are now able to be carried out in the Repromed Day Surgery Unit?

- At the moment Repromed only has approval to perform IVF related procedures (egg pickups and surgical sperm aspirations) and certain emergency cases such as surgical management of miscarriage. Hysteroscopies conducted at the same time as the oocyte retrieval operation are also permitted.
- Other general gynaecology cases (such as operative hysteroscopies) are still on hold until the 11th May when hopefully all Government restraints on surgery will be lifted.



Have Repromed's opening hours changed?

- Even with the lifting of elective surgery restrictions, we've been forced to make the difficult decision for both our patients and staff to maintain our temporary opening hours. As of Monday 27th April, 2020, our Dulwich clinic will be open from 7am until 3pm Monday to Friday and Saturday 8am until 1pm. Our on-site pharmacy will be open Monday, Wednesday and Friday 7am until 3pm. Mawson Lakes will continue to remain closed until the end of May. As activity levels and demand increase, we expect that Repromed's opening hours will return to normal.

We would like to thank you all for the way you have embraced the new way of conducting medical appointments via Telehealth, as a result of COVID-19. However it has meant that some important legal consents may not have been signed (for example IVF and surgical consents which would normally be completed during your face-to-face appointment). These documents still need to be completed before any procedure is carried out. Therefore, if you are booked on for IVF treatment you will be emailed the relevant consent forms to read. Details of your specific treatments will have already been discussed with your treating Fertility Doctor during your Telehealth consultation. If you are happy with the consents we ask that you sign the forms at admission to theatre prior to your procedure. The doctor performing your procedure will then counter-sign those consents. If you are not happy with any aspect of the consents or treatment plan we would ask that you make a review with your treating doctor to clarify that detail before your procedure.

Whilst this week's news is certainly encouraging we must still be vigilant in the way we ensure to minimise the spread of infection. This includes continuing with Telehealth appointments, temperature checking all visitors to our clinic, only providing treatment if you are well or have not had close contact with someone who has positively tested for COVID-19, maintaining good social distancing practices and limiting the number of people accessing our clinic at any one time. Unfortunately this means that partners and children are still unable to accompany patients into the ultrasound rooms, Day Surgery Unit and embryo transfer suites. I understand that limiting access of partners and children to our clinic can seem harsh but it is to minimise the risk of transmitting COVID-19 between fellow patients, our team and the broader community.

I recognise that this has been and will continue to be a very challenging time for people requiring fertility treatment. Rest assured that my team and I will continue to do everything we can to provide you with advice, support and treatment, where we are able to do so safely.

If you have not done so I encourage you to visit our website <https://repromed.com.au/covid-19-faq/> as we are constantly updating this section with information that you may find useful and which may help to alleviate any uncertainty during this time.

Thank you for your understanding during this every changing time and rest assured that 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.

Continue to stay safe and I wish you all the best with your treatment,

Professor Kelton Tremellen
Medical Director