



Dear Columbia University Fertility Patients,

We share in the heartbreak of having to pause fertility treatments and know how difficult these past few weeks have been. We have spent this time carefully planning how to resume fertility treatment in the safest way possible, minimizing risk to you and all our patients, staff and community. Now that we have these measures in place and are seeing declining numbers of new cases, we are excited to get back to our mission of helping bring life into the world.

We will be reopening in two phases.

- I. Beginning on **Wednesday April 29**, we will resume egg freezing and freeze-all IVF cycles for all patients. If you are interested in starting IVF soon, please reach out to your care team (nurse and financial coordinator) to make sure everything is in place to start the cycle (including consent forms, authorization for treatment and medications).
- II. Beginning on **Friday May 15**, we will resume all treatment cycles (timed intercourse, intrauterine insemination with partner or donor sperm, IVF with planned fresh embryo transfer, and frozen embryo transfer) and diagnostic testing. This date is tentative and subject to change as the COVID-19 situation evolves. Please reach out to your team if you want to start one of these types of treatments in mid to late May.

We have also put in place many new measures to make your treatment and the environment at Columbia University Fertility Center as safe as possible during this time. Below is a summary of some of the major changes taken and new policies.

1. We will be testing all patients for COVID-19 prior to the start of their IVF treatment cycles. For your convenience, a COVID-19 testing clinic is available on the 12th floor of 5 Columbus Circle. Appointments must be scheduled, so please work with your care team to schedule testing on day 1-3 of your period, if possible, or a few days prior to your expected period if you have regular cycles. The test must be negative within 7 days of your treatment starting.
2. COVID-19 test result will be available within 24 hours, typically the same evening. If the result is negative, you will be informed by phone call or e-mail to come in within 1-2 days for morning monitoring ultrasound and bloodwork from 7:30 – 11:30 am to hopefully start your IVF cycle. If the result is positive, you will be notified by a physician and options for further management will be discussed. Unfortunately, we will not be able to proceed with IVF treatment with a positive COVID-19 test.
3. Your morning monitoring appointments will be scheduled in order to reduce the number of patients present at the center at a given time. So, we ask that you try to keep to the time of your scheduled appointment.
4. While in the office and exam rooms, you will be required to cover your nose and mouth at all times. We will provide a surgical mask on the PH level if you do not already have one. We ask you to maintain physical distance of at least 6 feet from other patients in the waiting room or common hallway. All physicians and staff at the center will also be wearing masks.

5. Your temperature will be taken at each visit using a thermal (non-contact) or oral thermometer. If you have an elevated temperature, you will be referred to your primary physician and we will have to cancel the treatment cycle. All physicians and staff at CUFC will also have their temperatures checked daily.
6. If you develop symptoms concerning for or test positive for COVID-19 during the cycle, we will have to cancel the cycle. We will resume treatment in a future cycle when you are medically cleared and we will make every effort to avoid any financial implications from this cancellation.
7. After your temperature check, ultrasound and blood draw are completed you may get dressed and exit the fertility center. Your nurse will provide instructions via e-mail and are available for teaching via telehealth/zoom.
8. Nurses will be available for teaching and to answer questions via e-mail, telephone and/or video visits. The nurses are also able to perform medication teaching via telehealth visits. However, there will not be in-person, face-to-face meetings with nurses.
9. To protect our patients and staff, only the patient should come to the visit. Partners, friends, family and children should not be brought to any visits.
10. If a sperm sample is required for IVF, the sperm sample will need to be produced offsite (home or a nearby hotel) and bring it in to the fertility center, preferably within 1 hour of ejaculation. You will be given a home collection kit at one of your monitoring visits with required paperwork to complete prior to dropping off the sample. You must bring a valid form of identification and completed paperwork in advance.
11. You will still need a support person to take you home from the egg retrieval since anesthesia is given. We will not have visitors waiting in the waiting room, so your support person will receive a phone call when you are ready to go home.
12. We will be continuing to have all new and follow-up consultations with our physicians conducted via telehealth.

We are so excited to be able to resume care and do everything possible to help you achieve success. We appreciate your understanding and patience as we navigate your fertility treatment cycle in the safest and most effective way possible. If you have any questions please contact your care team.

Sincerely,

-Columbia University Fertility Center