



**The Shrewsbury and  
Telford Hospital**  
NHS Trust

## **Patient Information**

The Shropshire and Mid Wales

Fertility Centre

## **Time Lapse Incubation**

### **Shropshire and Mid Wales Fertility Centre**

Address: Severn Fields Health Village, Sundorne Road,  
Shrewsbury SY1 4RQ.

Tel: 01743 261202 / 01743 261199

## **Introduction**

In the field of IVF, one of the biggest challenges is to select the embryo most likely to result in the birth of a healthy baby. This leaflet explains how time-lapse imaging, also known as Embryoscope, could help maximise the chances of a successful pregnancy.

### **What is time lapse?**

In standard IVF, embryologists (scientists) must remove the embryos from the incubator several times to look at their development under a microscope and to select the ones that are most likely to implant. The time allowed for these examinations is short, as staff need to minimise the amount of time embryos spend outside of the safe environment of the incubator and avoid stress to the embryos.

The time-lapse system (Embryoscope) is a state-of-the-art embryo culture incubator with advanced EmbryoViewer software to help with embryo selection. It allows the embryologist to study the embryos without moving them and in much greater detail.

### **How does time-lapse work?**

The time-lapse system allows embryologists to monitor your embryos through the full course of their development. The specially designed incubator with a built in camera and microscope takes an image of your embryos every few minutes. As a result, time-lapse videos of individual embryos are generated over the two to six days they remain in the incubator while the embryos stay undisturbed in their stable culture environment. Advanced software helps the embryologist to use the information to select the best embryos with the highest chances of successful implantation and a healthy pregnancy.

### **Could it improve your chances?**

Some studies have shown that Time-lapse has the potential to improve IVF success. Selecting embryos this way has been reported to significantly reduce miscarriage rate compared with standard methods.

Twin and multiple pregnancy rates can be reduced. Being able to select a single embryo with the best developmental potential has similar pregnancy rates as transferring two embryos that have been selected in the standard way.

Finally, time-lapse may also be useful for older patients as some studies have reported improved pregnancy rates.

However, it is important to note that benefits are not conclusively proven at this stage.

Our regulators, the Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority class time-lapse as a black rated treatment 'add-on' and provide information for patients on their website which you are encouraged to read. They state that on balance, the evidence from moderate/high quality evidence shows that this add-on has no effect on the treatment outcome.

[www.hfea.gov.uk/treatments/explore-all-treatments/treatment-add-ons/](http://www.hfea.gov.uk/treatments/explore-all-treatments/treatment-add-ons/)  
[www.shropshireivf.nhs.uk/fertility-treatments-and-investigations/addons/](http://www.shropshireivf.nhs.uk/fertility-treatments-and-investigations/addons/)

For further information please ask to speak to an embryologist.

## **Risks, Benefits and Alternatives**

### **Your benefits as a patient**

Some studies have shown that time-lapse may support better embryo development by providing an undisturbed culture environment.

Time-lapse supports improved IVF-treatment by providing IVF-professionals with a better basis to identify the embryos with the best chance of resulting in a pregnancy.

Patients are offered a USB stick containing the embryo development imaging for both fresh and frozen cycles to keep. The USB stick is included in the cost but is optional as we understand that not all patients would like to receive this imaging.

### **Available alternatives**

Please also be aware that even when time-lapse is used embryos may on occasion need to be removed from the incubator for short periods of time to ensure correct operation and maintenance.

Should the embryoscope become unavailable for any reason we would switch to traditional incubation methods.

### **Are there any risks?**

Shropshire and Mid Wales Fertility Centre have been unable to identify any physical risks to either the patient or their embryos in using this technology.

### **Cost**

From the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023 we are pleased to be able to offer time lapse incubation as standard at no additional cost as this is now included in your treatment package for both fee-paying and NHS pathways.

### **Consent**

We ask you to sign an embryoscope agreement should you wish to go ahead. You can withdraw or vary this consent at any point if you change your mind.

### **Personal Data and Confidentiality**

You will be asked to sign a "consent to disclosure" form early on in your treatment pathway so that we can share your information with other professionals when it is necessary. We follow guidelines set by the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Trust and by our regulators, The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) to ensure we keep your personal information secure.

### **Counselling**

A specialist fertility counsellor is employed by Shropshire and Mid Wales Fertility Centre. Please let our staff know if you think you need an appointment.

## Contact details for more information

### Useful telephone numbers

Fertility Scientific Team **01743 261202** or call the hospital switchboard on **01743 261000** and ask to be put through to the Fertility unit. Please note the department accepts calls from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

## Further information is available from;

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

We act on your behalf when handling patient and family concerns, liaising with staff, managers and where appropriate, relevant organisations to negotiate immediate or prompt solutions. We can also help you get support from other local or national agencies.

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Tel: 0800 783 0057 or 01743 261691

Princess Royal Hospital, Tel: 01952 282888

## Other Sources of Information

### NHS 111

A fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

Telephone: 111 (free from a landline or mobile)

Website: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### Patient UK

Provides leaflets on health and disease translated into 11 other languages as well as links to national support/self-help groups and a directory of UK health websites.

Website: [www.patient.info](http://www.patient.info)

### Self Help & Support Groups

A selection of websites providing access to good quality patient and consumer health information, covering specific age groups and conditions.

Also includes Shropshire Community Directory which contains up-to-date information on community groups, clubs, societies, organisations, support groups and self-help groups covering Shropshire and its borders.

Website: [www.library.sath.nhs.uk/find/patients/](http://www.library.sath.nhs.uk/find/patients/)

Website: [www.sath.nhs.uk](http://www.sath.nhs.uk)

[www.shropshireivf.nhs.uk](http://www.shropshireivf.nhs.uk)

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