# ICSI Procedure

**WHAT IS ICSI?**

ICSI (Intra-cytoplasmic sperm injection) is an additional part of an IVF cycle. While in a standard IVF procedure the sperm and eggs are just mixed in a specially designed container, ICSI treatment means that a sperm is placed directly into an egg under a microscope.

This gives a chance to achieve fertilization even when the number of suitable sperm is very limited. ICSI success rates are higher than for a standard IVF (every fourth woman becomes pregnant after a single ICSI procedure).

**IS IT FOR US?**

Every clinic has its own standard, but on the whole ICSI treatment is recommended in case of severe male factor infertility when donor sperm insemination is not desirable. Although there are clinics that use it much more often.

ICSI method may be chosen in the following cases:

- a sperm count of not more than 20 million per milliliter

- not normal shape of sperm, poor motility (beneath the 35% level) or other problems like this

- a very low fertilization rate or fertilization failure during a previous IVF

- anti-sperm antibodies

- sperm needs to be retrieved surgically (after a vasectomy or injury, for instance)

- problems with an erection and ejaculating

- frozen sperm of not optimum quality is used.

ICSI method may also be recommended if you want your embryos to undergo genetic tests.

**PROCEDURE**

What is ICSI procedure from a patent perspective?

If you have undergone a usual IVF cycle, then you will recognize all the steps of the ICSI method, they are almost the same.

1. Both partners fill in consent forms and have bloods tests.

2. The woman takes special drugs encouraging development of the eggs. Ultrasounds are done in order to ensure the drugs work well. In many cases, ultrasounds are supplemented with blood tests.

3. The eggs are picked up (in the same way as in IVF). If possible, a new sample of sperm is collected in the same day. Sometimes, surgical sperm aspiration is required. If the sperm is stored in a frozen storage, it is thawed. In case of zero sperm count donor sperm may be considered.

4. Then the laboratory procedure of fertilization takes place. ICSI procedure is performed by an embryologist, who selects a sperm and places it into an egg with the help of special micro-manipulation equipment.

5. The embryos are kept in the laboratory for several days.

6. Not more than 3 embryos are returned back to the womb. If a multiple pregnancy is not desirable, your doctor will probably recommend a single embryo transfer.

**HOW MUCH DOES ICSI COST?**

Your ICSI treatment cost includes the following:

- blood tests before and during the treatment

- ultrasound scans

- medical counseling

- consultations with specialists during which you may discuss the possible ICSI success rates for your couple

- nursing care.

As far as your couple may need additional procedures, like frozen embryo transfer, ICSI procedure cost may vary.