

## PATIENT INFORMATION

# Metformin

### Adjuvant therapy

#### **What is adjuvant therapy?**

Adjuvant therapy, also known as 'add-ons', adjunct, complementary or alternative therapies, are recognised as an addition to standard assisted reproductive treatment and may be recommended to you with the intention to increase your success during your fertility treatment. There are numerous options available to you when accessing adjuvant therapies, including but not limited to the technology in laboratories, medical procedures, prescribed medications, nutritional supplements, and traditional medicines such as Chinese medicine, including acupuncture.

At present, the effectiveness of many adjuvant therapies is unknown, with little to no evidence that they will increase the success of your treatment or improve live birth rates. However, your health care provider may recommend adjuvant therapy when considering your medical history and tailoring your treatment plan.

It is important to consider the effectiveness, risks and financial costs of adjuvant therapies.

#### **What is metformin and how it is normally used?**

Metformin is classed as a biguanide antihyperglycemic drug. It is used to help control blood glucose levels in people with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus, especially in those who are overweight. It can be used alongside diet & exercise to help manage Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus when diet & exercise alone have not been enough to control blood glucose levels.

#### **Why is metformin recommended, and will it increase the success of my treatment?**

Your fertility specialist may recommend Metformin to you if you have a history of Poly Cystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) or a high fasting blood sugar level.

Metformin is an off label effective ovulation induction agent for non-obese women with PCOS and offers some advantages over other first line treatments for anovulatory infertility. Women with PCOS can produce higher levels of insulin which in turn can prevent the growth of ovarian follicles, leading to an accumulation of small follicles, thereby preventing ovulation.

Metformin reduces hyperinsulinemia (more insulin in blood than glucose) and suppresses the excessive ovarian production of androgens. Metformin is also thought to reduce the risk of OHSS in women with PCOS undergoing fertility treatment.

#### **What are the common side effects?**

Some common side effects can include:

- stomach upset such as feeling sick (nausea), vomiting, diarrhoea and stomach pain
- taste disturbance, loss of appetite



## PATIENT INFORMATION

# Metformin

### Adjuvant therapy

- skin reactions such as redness of the skin, itching or an itchy rash (urticaria).

*Regarding any additional side effects or contraindications for Metformin, please refer to the Consumer Medicine Information (CMI) sheet.*

Please notify your fertility specialist if you:

- nausea, vomiting, stomach pain
- trouble breathing
- feeling weak, tired or generally unwell
- unusual muscle pain
- sleepiness
- dizziness or light-headedness
- shivering, feeling extremely cold
- slow heartbeat

### **Are there risks to using metformin during pregnancy?**

Metformin is a Category C drug. Category C drugs have caused or may be suspected of causing, harmful effects on the human fetus or neonate without causing malformations. These effects may be reversible.

### **What are the costs?**

*Cost of Metformin:* The cost of Metformin will vary depending on the brand and pharmacy. A box of 500mg tablets could cost you around \$21.00.

*Is Metformin included in the cost of my cycle:* Metformin is an additional expense and is not included in the cost of your cycle.

*The information provided above is intended for educational purposes only and should not be used as a substitute or replacement for medical advice received from a medical professional. It is important to discuss your individual circumstances and situation with your treating doctor.*