

About Immunologic Therapy for Multiple Miscarriage (#32)

Immunotherapy, including Heparin, aspirin, paternal leukocyte immunization and IV immunoglobulin therapy, is used for women who test positive for the antibodies that may cause pregnancy loss or possible implantation problems. Immunotherapy for pregnancy loss or for the improvement of implantation in IVF cycles is still being evaluated. Some patients are obtaining a second opinion prior to doing these treatments. If you think you may be a candidate for immunologic therapy: you may want to discuss the following points with your doctor.

Heparin or Aspirin Treatment

- ❑ Have you had a blood test to document that you do have high titers of one of the immunologic factors that may be associated with miscarriage?
- ❑ Because some of these tests can give a false positive results, discuss having a repeat test done?
- ❑ Heparin affects blood clotting time. If you are going to take Heparin, tell your doctor if you have hypertension, prolonged bleeding, bruise easily, or have stomach ulcers or ulcerative colitis.
- ❑ If you are taking Heparin, ask your doctor how often and what type of blood tests will be done to monitor your blood clotting time.
- ❑ Aspirin can be irritating to your intestinal system so tell your doctor if you have a stomach ulcer, or ulcerative colitis.
- ❑ Ask the doctor if Heparin or aspirin will be continued if you get pregnant? If so, for how long into a pregnancy?
- ❑ Talk with an obstetrician about using either Heparin or aspirin medications during the second or third trimester in pregnancy.
- ❑ Long term use of Heparin may cause osteoporosis. Discuss this with your doctor and ask if you should be taking extra calcium.

IV Immunoglobulin Therapy

- ❑ Because immunoglobulin therapy uses blood products, discuss the possible health risks to you from IV immunoglobulin therapy.
- ❑ Discuss possible long-term effects from IV immunoglobulin therapy on the woman's immune system.
- ❑ If you have no history of pregnancy loss, discuss the doctor's reason for using IV immunoglobulin during an IVF cycle and the necessity of this additional cost. (Immunologic therapy for infertility is not covered by insurance.)

- ❑ Discuss how many immunoglobulin treatments will be needed. Ask about the timing and cost of each treatment.

Prednisone Therapy

- ❑ Prednisone, a type of steroid, can cause changes in bone density, especially in the hip joint.
- ❑ If you are on this drug, you must tell your primary care doctor and if you get sick with an upper respiratory tract infection or any other illness, you must be watched carefully as the steroids can mask the fact that you might have a significant infection and need antibiotics.

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Immunologic: QtoA
10/12