



## REDUCING STRESS AND ENHANCING WELL BEING DURING THE IVF CYCLE

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Undergoing infertility treatments can be one of the most challenging times in life. Coping with medical procedures, emotional issues and financial pressures requires determination, commitment and courage. The following suggestions are offered as ways to reduce stress and enhance well-being as you proceed with cycle:

**Educate yourself:** Make sure you have had all your questions answered by medical staff. You can also research topics on your own. Having a good base of knowledge about your condition and treatment can decrease anxiety.

**Maintain a healthy lifestyle and incorporate practices that reduce stress:** Moderate exercise, a nutritious diet and adequate sleep can help to reduce stress and dissipate the impact of hormonal medications. Yoga, meditation and progressive muscle relaxation can foster a sense of tranquility and well-being. Instructional videos and tapes can be useful in developing these techniques.

**Broaden your base of support:** Infertility can lead to social isolation at a time when you need as much support as possible. Contact Resolve for referrals to local support groups, experienced therapists and informational seminars. Also, Zouves Fertility Center can connect you with former patients who have volunteered to become part of our Patient Advocate Program.

**Develop strategies for dealing with friends and family:** Tell the people who care about you how they can best support you. Is it better if they don't ask questions? Do you prefer to keep the details of your infertility treatment a private matter? Can they bring you a meal or walk your dog if they want to be helpful?

**Talking things over:** Let the people who are close to you know how things are going. Releasing pent up feelings and emotions can relieve some of the pressure. You don't have to go through this alone.

**Draw comfort from your spiritual faith:** The frustration of unanswered questions about infertility often leads people to seek solace from their spiritual faith. Spiritual leaders may be helpful in guiding you towards a perspective of increased understanding and inner peace.

**Acquire an attitude of cautious optimism and compassion:** A positive, yet realistic, outlook towards outcome is most beneficial. Remember that you are doing the best you can under the circumstances. Try not to torment yourself about past decisions. They were based soundly on the information you had at the time.

**Investigate alternatives:** It may be comforting to have a "back up plan" in place in the event the cycle is unsuccessful. Gather information about ovum donation, surrogacy, adoption or foster care. If you are committed to becoming a parent and are open to alternatives, there is definitely a way for you to realize your dream. Remember that these options may be second choice, but they are never second best.