



Issue 8, April 2009

Join us for Mother's Day

Sunday May 10th is Mother's Day, an opportunity to acknowledge the love and support of your mother. For many couples who have yet to welcome a child into their family – or who have lost a baby – Mother's Day can also be a difficult time.

Nurture aims to help more New Zealand women become pregnant and deliver a healthy, full-term baby that will have the best start in life. We see Mother's Day as a time to celebrate the blessings of motherhood and the perfect opportunity to raise funds for research that will help more women become mothers. With this in mind, we are holding two fundraising events on Mother's Day this year, and we hope you will join us for at least one of them.

Our second annual 'New Idea Run 4 Mums' takes place in Auckland's beautiful Cornwall Park. Bring the whole family or a group of friends and enjoy an active Mother's Day morning together with a 5 or 10km fun run or walk.

We'll also be celebrating Mother's Day with Allyson Gofton at the Twinings Mother's Day Afternoon Tea, to be held in the Heritage Auckland Grand Tearoom. Bring your mother or a group of friends and enjoy the elegant ritual of high tea. You'll find more details about both these events and how to get tickets inside.

You can also support Nurture by sponsoring someone who is taking part in Run 4 Mums. Simply visit www.fundraiseonline.co.nz and click on the Run 4 Mums logo to find participants fundraising for Nurture – including some well known obstetricians.

Nurture has an opportunity to become the preferred charity for Flossie.com – and by registering and voting for Nurture before April 26 you have the chance to win a trip to Fiji. Please take a few minutes to register your support for Nurture.

We hope you will join us on Mother's Day, and look forward to hearing your ideas for future fundraising events. If there are specific topics you would like covered in the Newsletter please also give us a call or send an email. We look forward to hearing from you.

Cindy Farquhar
Nurture Foundation Trustee

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The Nurture Foundation
PO Box 109-167
Newmarket
Auckland

Ph: 09 373 7599 ext 89493

Email: admin@nurture.org.nz

New Research: IVF-LUBE Study

Previous research conducted by Neil Johnson has shown that Lipiodol, a poppy seed oil, is an effective fertility treatment for couples with unexplained infertility and for women with mild endometriosis. Pregnancies in these studies occurred naturally, through sexual intercourse after the Lipiodol treatment.

While success rates for IVF and ICSI continue to improve, the point at which treatment often fails is after embryo transfer. To date few studies have uncovered ways to overcome implantation failure – but treatments to improve the chance of embryos implanting would revolutionise IVF/ICSI treatments.

With this in mind, Neil Johnson is embarking on a new study to determine whether Lipiodol would benefit women going through IVF/ICSI who have had recurrent implantation failure in previous IVF/ICSI cycles. The study aims to determine whether bathing the uterus with Lipiodol prior to IVF/ICSI treatment will improve the chance of pregnancy for women with previous IVF/ICSI implantation failure, and also for women with endometriosis who are having IVF/ICSI treatment.

It is thought that Lipiodol may enhance the environment within the womb, making it more receptive to embryo implantation. An embryo is essentially 'foreign tissue' in the mother's body, and for pregnancy to occur the mother's immune system needs to be sent the right signals so that the embryo is not



rejected. Lipiodol may enhance cell-signalling within the endometrium, enabling the embryo to successfully implant.

The IVF-LUBE study aims to recruit 350 participants from fertility clinics throughout New Zealand including: Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, Waikato and Wellington. As part of an international multi-centre trial, participants may also be sought in Australia and the UK.

Participants will be randomised to receive either Lipiodol uterine bathing prior to starting drugs for their scheduled IVF/ICSI cycle, or proceed with IVF/ICSI alone. To be included in the study participants need to be:

- Women aged 39 or under
- Infertility has been established for more than 12 months or the cause of infertility is known
- Both fallopian tubes are clear and unblocked
- Scheduled to undergo IVF/ICSI
- Have had three consecutive embryo

transfers (fresh or thawed embryos of good quality) that did not result in pregnancy or have been diagnosed with endometriosis

If you are interested in taking part in this study or would like further information, please contact Shelley Reilly on:

Phone: 021 915 771

Email: sreilly@adhb.govt.nz

FertilityNZ information day

FertilityNZ is holding an information day on Saturday 20th June at Sky City, Auckland, which may be of interest to couples who are finding it difficult to become pregnant. Fertility experts and popular providers of alternative and complementary medicine will take part in a day of talks, workshops and question and answer forums. Two key note speakers are **Allyson Gofton**, Ambassador for Nurture, who will share her fertility journey, and **Professor Peter Gluckman**, a world expert on peri-conceptual health. For more information please visit www.fertilitynz.org.nz

SANDS National Conference 2009

Sands New Zealand (Stillbirth and Newborn Death Support) is holding its biennial conference in Auckland on Friday 7th and Saturday 8th August at the Waipuna Hotel & Conference Centre. The conference offers a wide range of speakers and topics that will interest bereaved parents, families and all health and caring professionals who are interested in pregnancy, baby and infant loss. For more information or to download a registration form please visit www.sands.org.nz

Research Findings: SCOPE Study

One of the first publications from the SCOPE study has found that women who stop smoking before week 15 of pregnancy reduce their risk of spontaneous premature birth and having small babies to the same as non-smokers. Women who do not quit by 15 week are three times more likely to give birth prematurely and twice as likely to have small babies compared to women who have stopped smoking. This finding demonstrates how important it is for women to give up smoking before 15 weeks of pregnancy, and to aim to become smoke free as early in pregnancy as possible.

While it is well established that smoking in pregnancy increases the risk of miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, premature birth, small babies, stillbirth and neonatal death, no study has yet determined whether stopping smoking in early pregnancy reduces the risks of small babies and premature births.

Lesley McCowan and Robyn North and their team surveyed over 2,500 pregnant women participating in the SCOPE study in Australia and New

Zealand at 15 weeks gestation. The participants were divided into three groups: non smoker, stopped smoker and current smoker. The 'stopped smoker' group all gave up before 15 weeks of pregnancy and 94% had stopped smoking by 12 weeks.



Professor Lesley McCowan

The results show that there were no differences between the rates of premature birth between stopped smokers and non-smokers, whereas women who continued to smoke at 15 weeks of pregnancy had a 3 fold higher

risk. Similar results were revealed for expected baby size.

Another important finding was that women who stopped smoking were not more stressed than women who continued to smoke. The smoking status of the participants was also associated with social and health inequalities. Smokers were more likely to be single mothers, less well educated, unemployed, overweight or underweight. They were more likely to be drinking alcohol and less likely to be taking folic acid at 15 weeks of pregnancy.

These early findings from the SCOPE Study are of considerable public health importance. The data suggest that the adverse effect of smoking on late pregnancy outcomes may be largely preventable if smoking is stopped early in pregnancy. This gives pregnant women who smoke an important incentive to become smoke-free early in pregnancy.

Published March 2009 BMJ.com

Great day out at the Teddy Bears Picnic

Nurture was again the 'official charity' for the Teddy Bear's Picnic in Auckland, held on March 2nd. It was hot, hard work for our volunteers who were managing the extremely popular horizontal bungee! Linda Adamson of Love to Sing performed on stage to support Nurture, and also kindly donated a selection of Love to Sing DVDs to be raffled.



Action on the horizontal bungee!

A limited edition Steiff teddy bear was also raffled and the lucky winners drawn on stage at the end of the Picnic. A great day out was had by all children and their teddies!



Raffle prizes drawn onstage by Linda Adamson

A Night at the Oscars



Taking bids for 'Chrysanthemum'

The Nurture Foundation teamed up with National Women's Health to hold a glamorous "Night at the Oscars" Ball on March 14th at Sky City. Doctors, midwives and staff from National Women's Health attended the Ball, along with their colleagues from private practice.

Nurture organised live and silent auctions on the night which raised \$9,000. Highly sought after was an original artwork donated by renowned New Zealand artist John Reynolds, painted in the Nurture colours and titled "Chrysanthemum".



Bring your friends and family to New Idea Run 4 Mums

We're holding our second annual Run 4 Mums event on Mother's Day, Sunday May 10th. New Idea Run 4 Mums is for everyone – men and women, boys and girls.

Bring a group of friends or family and enjoy a 5 or 10 km fun run or walk through Auckland's beautiful Cornwall Park, followed by a picnic in One Tree Hill Domain with music, kids' entertainment, spot prizes and more.

Every participant gets a great goody bag too,



packed with sponsors' products, samples and giveaways. The event was a lot of fun last year, and we think this year will be even better! There are loads of great spot prizes to be won including a Brooks technical running pack, \$250 New World shopping voucher, Johnson's gift hampers, a family pass to the Sky Tower and a massage treatment at Bella Mama.

Visit www.nurture.org.nz to check out the prizes and to enter online.

Obstetricians to run with pregnancy bellies!



Tim Dawson on the wards

Four high profile male obstetricians – Martin Sowter, Neil Johnson, Denys Court and Tim Dawson – will be raising funds for Nurture and wearing pregnancy bellies when they take part in New Idea Run 4 Mums. The pregnancy bellies give men an understanding of what it feels like to be pregnant, and come complete with breasts, tummy, 13kg weights (the average weight a woman puts on at 38 weeks pregnancy) and bladder restrictor.

You can make a donation to Martin, Denys, Neil or Tim's fundraising efforts by visiting their fundraising pages on www.fundraiseonline.co.nz. And make sure you don't miss their marathon efforts at Run 4 Mums on May 10th – it should be highly entertaining!



Neil Johnson at Fertility Plus

Twinnings Mother's Day afternoon tea



If an early morning run in Cornwall Park isn't your thing, why not treat your mum to the elegant ritual of high tea instead?

Held in the art deco opulence of the Heritage Auckland Grand Tearoom, the Twinnings Mother's Day Afternoon Tea will be a very memorable afternoon. This fundraising event will be hosted by

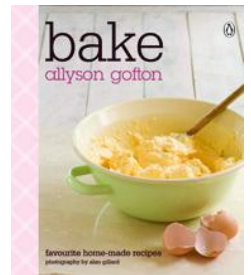
Nurture's Ambassador, Allyson Gofton.

You'll be treated to a glass of Méthode Champenoise on arrival, three tiered cake stands of sweet and savoury delicacies, an entertaining tea tasting session with Twinnings' Master Tea

Taster and a short but lively auction with some unique experiences to be auctioned. Allyson Gofton will also be signing copies of her new book "Bake" and there will be some fabulous silent auction items too.

Tickets are only \$50 per person, available through Ticketek. [Click here](http://www.ticketek.co.nz) to book online now, or for more information visit www.nurture.org.nz

Purchase your tickets before 1 May to go into the draw to win a night for two at The Heritage Auckland. Book a table of ten and you'll also receive a complimentary copy of Allyson's new book 'Bake'.



Vote for Nurture and you could win a trip to Fiji

Nurture has a chance to become Flossie's preferred charity – and by voting for Nurture you have a chance to win a fabulous trip to Fiji! Voting closes on April 26th so you need to be quick.

Flossie.com is an online portal for women, and is in the process of choosing a charity partner who will receive \$100,000 worth of advertising across the Flossie Network, a core menu page on Flossie.com and the proceeds from a Smart Car giveaway.



By going online to Flossie.com <http://www.flossie.com/competitions/win-a-trip-for-two-to-fiji/>

registering and nominating Nurture, you will enter the draw to win a trip for two to Nadi (Fiji) plus VIP transfers to the Hilton in a luxury car. This prize includes five nights in a spacious suite on the beachfront, with delicious breakfasts, lunches and dinners for two each day, and ten complimentary beverages daily.

Register and vote for Nurture now, and ask your friends and family to do the same.

Plush Toys and OHbaby! winners

Readers of OHbaby! magazine who subscribed to the Nurture newsletter during the past four months have gone into a weekly draw to win a gorgeous Noonoo snugly blanket from Plush Toys. All new subscribers were also included in the final draw to win a stunning gift hamper of assorted Noonoo products. This fantastic prize was drawn on April 20, and the gift hamper is now on its way to Bron Hudson.



Our thanks to OHbaby! and Plush Toys for supporting Nurture through this promotion. Congratulations to all the winners – we hope you will find the Nurture Newsletter interesting and informative!



International research round-up

IVF drugs do not increase the risk of ovarian cancer

Researchers at the Danish Cancer Society have determined that taking fertility drugs does not increase the chances of developing ovarian cancer.

54,362 women who attended fertility clinics between 1963 and 1998 were included in this large-scale study which monitored four groups of fertility drugs. Only 156 women went on to develop ovarian cancer. However, researchers will continue to monitor women in this study into the future, as some may not yet have reached the age where ovarian cancer is most common.

Previous studies have not been conclusive as to whether fertility drugs increase the risk of ovarian cancer in women undergoing several cycles of IVF. This study found there was no increased risk among women who had 10 or more IVF cycles or those who did not become pregnant. The increased risk of ovarian cancer amongst women who had taken clomiphene citrate was found by the researchers to be coincidental.

Although rare, ovarian cancer is difficult to detect in the early stages when it is most easily treated. Women who have undergone IVF – or are currently having treatment – will be reassured by the results of this study.

British Medical Journal, Feb 2009

Sperm DNA damage is associated with increased risk of miscarriage after IVF and ICSI

Sperm DNA damage is common amongst infertile men and may have a negative impact on natural conception and assisted conception through IUI and, to a lesser extent, IVF. A recent study at McGill University in Montreal looked at whether sperm DNA damage might also increase the risk of miscarriage after IVF and ICSI. This systematic review and meta-analysis looked at 11 studies on sperm DNA damage and pregnancy loss after IVF and ICSI. These 11 studies involved 1549 cycles of treatment (IVF or ICSI) with 640 pregnancies and 122 pregnancy losses. The review concluded that sperm DNA damage is associated with a significantly increased risk of pregnancy loss after IVF and ICSI, and that an evaluation of sperm DNA damage prior to IVF or ICSI could be undertaken.

Human Reproduction, Dec 2008

Menstrual length is a marker of female fertility

Researchers in Sweden investigated whether menstrual cycle length was associated with success rates in IVF and ICSI and could be used as a marker of ovarian reserve.

A total of 6,271 IVF/ICSI treatment cycles were included in the study, and women were asked to report the average number of menstrual days during the last year before starting treatment.

The researchers found that the chance of delivering a baby after IVF/ICSI almost doubled for women with a menstrual cycle length greater than 34 days, compared with women with a menstrual cycle length of less than 26 days. Menstrual cycle length was also significantly associated with ovarian response to FSH/hMG stimulation and embryo quality.

The researchers concluded that mean menstrual length is highly related to success rates in assisted reproduction, independent of age. A precise menstrual cycle history could be used as a simple marker of ovarian reserve.

Fertility and Sterility, Nov 2008

PGD in women of advanced maternal age caused a decrease in clinical pregnancy rate

Women of advanced maternal age (38 years and older) are less likely to achieve a clinical pregnancy through IVF, mostly due to an increased rate of chromosomal abnormalities. It was thought that transferring only embryos that had no chromosomal abnormalities would improve the pregnancy rate for this group of women.

A study conducted recently in Sweden tested whether Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis (PGD) in women aged 38 or older would improve the clinical pregnancy rate. Women in the PGD group of the study were compared with a control group and the primary outcome measure was clinical pregnancy rate after 6-7 weeks of gestation per randomised patient.

Of the 320 patients planned to be included in the study, 56 were randomised to PGD and 53 randomised to the control group. The clinical pregnancy rate in the PGD group was 8.9% compared with 24.5% in the control group.

The study was terminated early because of this result, but provides evidence against the use of PGD for women of advanced maternal age undergoing IVF.

Human Reproduction, Dec 2008

PGD does not improve delivery rate in women under 36 years following single embryo transfer

Single embryo transfer aims to reduce the risk of multiple births that has been associated with assisted reproduction. Through Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis (PGD) embryos that do not have chromosomal abnormalities can be identified and selected for transfer after IVF.

Researchers at the Centre for Medical Genetics in Brussels conducted a study to see if PGD would aid the selection of a single embryo to transfer after IVF in women aged under 36 years. Women were randomly assigned to undergo transfer of a single blastocyst in a cycle with or without PGD looking for chromosomal abnormalities.

After recruiting 120 of the projected 447 patients in each group, the study was terminated early, on the basis of futility, as there was no difference in the live birth rates between the two groups.

The researchers found there was no benefit in PGD to improve live birth rates following single embryo transfer in women aged under 36 years.

Human Reproduction, Dec 2008

The statements and conclusions contained in this publication are those of the author(s) only and not necessarily those of the Nurture Foundation, its trustees or employees. If advice on any of the issues covered in this publication is required, it should be sought on a formal, professional basis and no reliance should be placed on any information contained in this publication.

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