

## Catheter Test Patient Information Leaflet

---

### What is a catheter test?

The catheter test is a common procedure. It gives your doctor the opportunity to perfect the technique needed to do your actual embryo transfer in cases where it is suspected to be difficult.

### Why is a catheter test done?

Having a catheter test is a lot like having an embryo transfer. During embryo transfer we use a very soft catheter which contains your embryo and is performed as gently as possible. A difficult embryo transfer has been associated with lower pregnancy success rates. In cases where we think that difficulty might be anticipated during the actual embryo transfer in view of your medical history we may recommend you to have a catheter test beforehand.

### What does the catheter test involve?

The catheter test is usually done before starting the IVF cycle. You will probably be told to come that day with a full bladder. This is because your full bladder pushes the uterus into a position which makes the procedure easier. A speculum will be used to help your clinical practitioner visualise the neck of your womb (cervix), more like having a smear test, and place the catheter into and through the cervix into your uterus. You may feel cramping or a sharp but tolerable pain when the catheter is placed. Some women only feel slight discomfort like during a smear, and nothing more.

### What is the aim of the procedure?

The aim of the procedure is to choose the best catheter to use with your anatomy. This test checks to see whether there are any reasons why the catheter may not enter the cervix smoothly. This test helps to find the best path from your cervix into your uterus which may vary according to the position of the uterus.

### Why do I need a catheter test?

If you had any previous surgeries to your cervix, uterine abnormalities, cervical fibroids, or any other factor that can make the passage through your cervix into the uterine cavity difficult.

### Do I need anaesthetic?

No, the procedure is performed whilst you are awake. The procedure should be as gentle as possible and painless similar to embryo transfer. However, you may experience some discomfort especially if the passage through the cervix is difficult which may lead your doctor to offer you a further procedure.

### Are there any risks?

It is generally considered a very safe procedure. There is a very rare chance of developing an infection. If you develop a high temperature within a few days of the procedure, experience severe cramping, unusual bleeding (not just spotting), offensive vaginal discharge, or you are concerned at any time, please contact the Hewitt Fertility Centre for further advice. There is also a small chance that the procedure gets abandoned due to difficult entry, hence a subsequent procedure would then be required at a later date.

Document Code: P-INFO-GEN-61	Version No: 3	Document Title: Catheter Test PIL	
Date of issue: 09.02.2023	Date of review: 09.02.2026	Owner: A, Chiara	Author: A. Chiara

## How much does it cost?

Currently if your treatment is funded by the NHS, you may be eligible to have the procedure performed without cost. If you are paying for your treatment an additional cost will be incurred.

This leaflet can be made available in difference formats on request. If you would like to make any suggestions or comments about the content of this leaflet, then please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0151 702 4353 or by email at [pals@lwh.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@lwh.nhs.uk)

Hewitt Fertility Centre (Liverpool)  
Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust  
Crown Street  
Liverpool  
L8 7SS  
Tel: 0151 702 4121 / 4123  
Email: [Hewitt.Centre@lwh.nhs.uk](mailto:Hewitt.Centre@lwh.nhs.uk)

Hewitt Fertility Centre (Knutsford)  
4 The Pavilions  
Knutsford Business Park  
Mobberley Road  
Knutsford  
WA16 8ZR  
Tel: 01565 653287