

# COASTAL IVF

## OVARIAN HYPERSTIMULATION SYNDROME (OHSS)



Ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome (OHSS) is a potentially serious complication of fertility treatments such as IVF, caused by overstimulation of the ovaries. This condition leads to enlarged ovaries and fluid accumulation in the abdomen. While rare, severe cases can require medical attention.

### Symptoms of OHSS:

Mild discomfort after egg collection is common. However, if you are concerned or notice any of the following symptoms, please contact our clinic and speak to one of our nurses.

- **Mild OHSS** - Abdominal discomfort, swelling and nausea.
  - This is the most common form of OHSS and usually does not require treatment
- **Moderate OHSS** - More significant abdominal pain and vomiting
- **Severe OHSS** – Dehydration, extreme thirst and minimal urine output.
  - Serious but rare complications include blood clots, or difficulty breathing due to a build-up of fluid in your lungs. If you have any of these symptoms you should contact our clinic immediately.

Most symptoms resolve within 7-10 days. If you conceive following a fresh transfer, symptoms may worsen due to hCG and can last longer, sometimes for several weeks.

### Who is at most risk?

Patients at higher risk of developing OHSS include those with a previous history of OHSS, polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), young women under age 30, women with a low body mass index, a high ovarian response (more than 20 follicles) and those who become pregnant following a fresh embryo transfer.

### Our approach at Coastal IVF

Your safety is our priority. We undertake proactive measures to minimise your risk or symptoms of OHSS including:

- Individually tailored cycle plans, FSH dosing and triggering
- Early ultrasounds and regular blood tests
- Medications such as Bromocriptine and IV Albumin

### Freeze-all and cycle cancellation:

If ultrasound scans, blood tests, or other assessments indicate a high risk of OHSS, your cycle may be modified or cancelled to prevent complications. In some cases, your specialist may choose to proceed with egg collection while implementing strategies to reduce the severity of OHSS. This could involve delaying embryo transfer and freezing all embryos, to avoid further ovarian stimulation if pregnancy occurs. Once your ovaries have settled, a frozen embryo transfer can be safely scheduled.



### Management of OHSS:

OHSS is usually a self-limiting condition that improves over time. Treatment mainly focuses on supportive care to manage symptoms and prevent complications.

You should always contact our clinic and speak to one of our nurses for advice. If it is after-hours and you cannot reach your doctor, please call Buderim Private Hospital on 07 5430 3100.

### At-Home Management for Mild OHSS:

- Drink at least 2 litres of fluids daily, including electrolyte drinks (e.g. Hydralyte)
- Stay as active as comfortable but avoid strenuous activity.
- Weigh yourself daily and keep a record of your weight.
- Use paracetamol or codeine for pain relief if needed—avoid NSAIDs.
- Anti-sickness drugs may be prescribed to help with nausea and vomiting.

### For Moderate to Severe OHSS:

- Often, you may be managed at home, but hospitalisation can be required.
- Your doctor may arrange ultrasound scans, blood tests, and careful monitoring of your fluid intake and output. An intravenous drip can be used to replace fluids.
- Your specialist might recommend wearing compression stockings to prevent blood clots and, in some cases, prescribe daily Clexane injections.
- In severe cases a needle or tube may be inserted under ultrasound guidance to remove fluid from your abdomen or lungs for symptom relief.

### Pregnancy:

While pregnancy can sometimes prolong or worsen symptoms of OHSS, it is important to understand that OHSS does not typically have a negative impact on the pregnancy itself.

The outlook for a healthy pregnancy remains very good.

***Please seek urgent medical attention if you notice worsening symptoms or experience difficulty breathing, severe abdominal pain, or any other concerning signs.***