

Your Introductory Guide to  
**Fertility Tests**

[www.littlebeanjourney.com](http://www.littlebeanjourney.com)



**It may take longer than you expect to become pregnant – for example, after you have stopped using contraception – even in completely normal cases. Initial difficulties in getting pregnant don't necessarily mean that you will be unable to conceive naturally, or that there are any fertility issues. However, if you have been trying for some time and are concerned that “nothing seems to be happening”, then speak to your GP who may refer you for some fertility tests.**

**The Little Bean Journey team has created this introductory guide, to help you to understand what fertility tests are about and who should have which test.**

## Do I need a fertility test?

It's sometimes difficult to know whether you need a fertility check or not. A common question is, "When should I seek help?". We recommend that you consider getting your fertility checked out if you are:

- ▶ under 35 years old and have been trying to get pregnant for a year
- ▶ over 35 and have been trying to get pregnant for 6 months.

You will also need to have a range of fertility tests if you are about to start fertility treatment. If you have previously had fertility treatment which has failed, your specialist will want to make sure that you undergo appropriate fertility checks before you begin a new cycle of treatment.

If you are not ready to start a family now but are considering fertility preservation options, such as having your eggs frozen for the future, it is also important to have your fertility tested.

In general, fertility tests are designed to help your fertility specialist understand your fertility health and to help you and your specialist to decide on the right treatment plan.

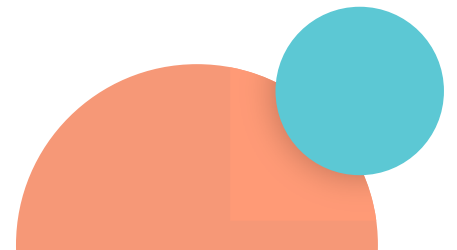


## What fertility tests will I have?

### For Women :

There are a range of tests designed to assess a woman’s fertility, and to identify and reduce any barriers to conceiving. A number of common tests are listed below.

Test	What’s it for?	Where to go for your test	Estimated cost
Pelvic ultrasound scan	This scan checks that your cervix, uterus and ovaries are all functioning correctly.	A scan needs to be carried out in a hospital or a fertility clinic	£150 - £200
Antral follicle count scan (AFC)	This scan assesses your ovarian reserve/number of eggs. (An AFC is typically carried out at the same time as a pelvic ultrasound scan.)		
Anti-Mullerian Hormone (AMH)	Ovarian reserve naturally reduces with age and can affect egg production. The AMH test gives an indication of the level of your ovarian reserve.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your GP practice (if you are eligible for NHS fertility treatment)</li> <li>• Fertility clinic or hospital</li> <li>• Some private GP clinics</li> </ul>	£90 - £120
Estradiol test	This test is designed to measure the amount of the hormone estradiol in your blood and is another indicator of your ovarian reserve.	Fertility clinic or hospital	£50 – £60



**For Women :**

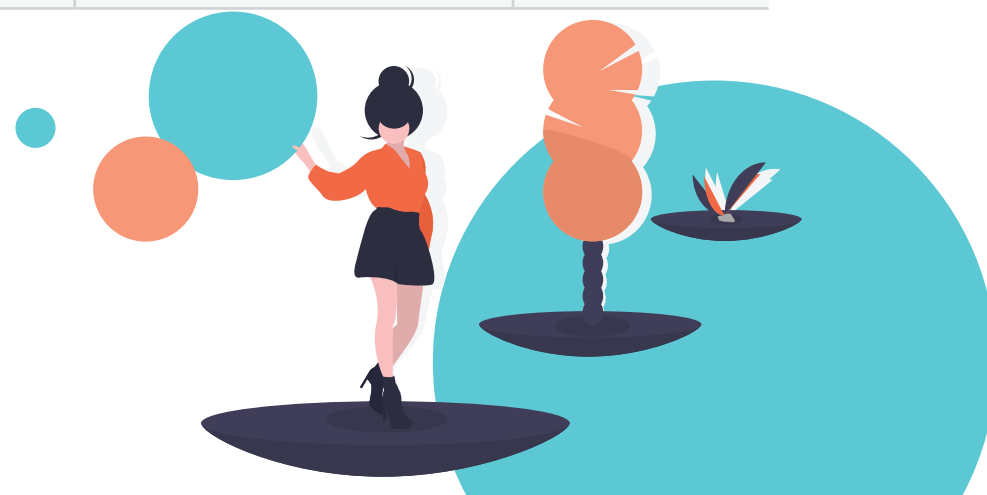
Test	What's it for?	Where to go for your test	Estimated cost
Prolactin test	<p>The levels of the naturally occurring hormone prolactin may be tested. If the level of prolactin is too high, it can stop you from ovulating.</p> <p>For more information about prolactin, see our article, "The Master Gland – The Role of the Pituitary in Fertility".</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your GP practice (if you are eligible for NHS fertility treatment)</li> <li>Fertility clinic or hospital</li> <li>Some private GP clinics</li> </ul>	<b>£50 – £60</b>
Progesterone test	<p>The level of the hormone progesterone typically increases after ovulation. A blood test can be carried out to check your levels of progesterone to see if you are ovulating.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your GP practice (if you are eligible for NHS fertility treatment)</li> <li>Fertility clinic or hospital</li> <li>Some private GP clinics</li> </ul>	<b>£50 – £60</b>
Thyroid stimulating hormone test (TSH)	<p>Levels of the thyroid hormone that are either too high or low can affect ovulation. The TSH test checks to see whether or not your thyroid hormone levels lie within the normal range.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your GP practice (if you are eligible for NHS fertility treatment)</li> <li>Fertility clinic or hospital</li> <li>Some private GP clinics</li> </ul>	<b>£50 - £130</b> Depending on the number of markers analysed
Hysterosalpingo-contrast-sonography (usually shortened to HyCoSy)	<p>This test investigates the fallopian tubes. Difficulty in becoming pregnant may be due to damaged or blocked fallopian tubes.</p>	Fertility clinic or hospital	<b>£450 - £550</b>



### For Women :

Although not specifically “fertility” tests, the following supplementary tests are often carried out to check other factors which may indirectly affect fertility, or may require special procedures to be observed.

Test	What's it for?	Where to go for your test	Estimated cost
Full blood count test	This makes sure that you are in good health and not fighting any infections. For example, the test is helpful in identify whether you are anaemic, which would require you to take iron supplements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your GP practice</li> <li>• Fertility clinic or hospital</li> <li>• Some private GP clinics</li> </ul>	£35 - £50
Vitamin D	A specific Vitamin D test is useful as women with low vitamin D levels may be less likely to conceive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your GP practice</li> <li>• Fertility clinic or hospital</li> <li>• Some private GP clinics</li> </ul>	£35 - £50
Cervical smear	A smear test checks for pre-cancerous cells on the cervix. Early detection of abnormal cells means that early treatment can be given to reduce the risk of developing cancer at a later date.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your GP practice</li> <li>• Fertility clinic or hospital</li> <li>• Some private GP clinics</li> </ul>	£60 - £80



**For Women :**

<b>Test</b>	Virology tests
<b>What's it for?</b>	<p>Clinics are required by the HFEA (The UK's fertility regulator) to carry out virology tests.</p> <p>The virology tests aim to identify if you are, or have been in the past, infected with certain viruses and will look for evidence of the following viral infections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HIV 1 &amp; 2</li> <li>• Hepatitis B surface antigen</li> <li>• Hepatitis B core antibody</li> <li>• Hepatitis C</li> <li>• Rubella</li> <li>• Chlamydia</li> </ul> <p>Some viruses can affect fertility. For example, chlamydia can cause damage to your fallopian tubes so testing for an infection is important when trying to deduce why you may be having fertility issues.</p> <p>A rubella (also known as “German measles”) test checks whether you are immune to rubella infection. This is an important test as catching rubella while pregnant may affect your baby’s development. If the test finds you do not have immunity, you will be offered a vaccine to protect you and your future baby from infection. Proof of immunity from rubella is required before you can start fertility treatment.</p> <p>Some virology tests are conducted to ensure that any biological samples (e.g. eggs or sperm) from patients who have a particular virus can be handled separately to avoid the risk of cross-contamination. If you are considering fertility treatment, we recommend that these virology tests are carried out as soon as possible.</p>
<b>Where to go for your test</b>	<p>These tests are normally carried out in a hospital or a private fertility clinic</p> <p>However, you can get your vaccinations done at your GP practice or at some private GP clinics</p>
<b>Estimated cost</b>	£100 - £150

## What fertility tests will I have?

### For Men :

The following tests are designed to assess fertility health in a man so that any problems a couple may have in starting a family can be identified and addressed.

Test	What's it for?	Where to go for your test	Estimated cost
Semen analysis	<p>This test establishes the overall “state of health” of both sperm and the fluid (or secretion) that the sperm is found in – the sperm and fluid are collectively referred to as semen. The semen analysis test specifically checks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sperm concentration (the number of sperm)</li> <li>• Sperm morphology (the shape and size of sperm)</li> <li>• Sperm mobility (is the sperm actively moving and if it is moving in the proper direction)</li> <li>• Semen volume (how much semen is produced in a typical ejaculation).</li> </ul>	Fertility clinic or hospital	£110 - £150
Hormone tests	<p>Blood tests for detecting the levels of hormones, such as follicle-stimulating hormone and testosterone, may be required for some men.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your GP practice</li> <li>• Fertility clinic or hospital</li> <li>• Some private GP clinics</li> </ul>	Depending on the number of tests required



**For Men :**

<p><b>Virology test</b></p>	<p>As for women, clinics are required by the HFEA (The UK's fertility regulator) to carry out the following virology tests on male patients:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• HIV 1 &amp; 2</li><li>• Hepatitis B surface antigen</li><li>• Hepatitis B core antibody</li><li>• Hepatitis C</li><li>• Chlamydia</li><li>• Rubella.</li></ul> <p>These virology tests check whether you are, or have been in the past, infected with specific viruses.</p>	<p>These tests are normally carried out done in a hospital or a private fertility clinic</p> <p>However, you can get your vaccinations done at your GP practice or at some private GP clinics</p>	<p><b>£100 - £150</b></p>
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**Need more info?**

If you require further information or help, or want to know what to do next, please contact us at [support@littlebeanjourney.com](mailto:support@littlebeanjourney.com)



## What's next?

This step-by-step outline is for individuals, or couples, who are considering fertility treatment.

1

Get in touch with us at [support@littlebeanjourney.com](mailto:support@littlebeanjourney.com) with the following information:

- ▶ Your age and your partner's age (or age range)
- ▶ If you have previously undergone any fertility tests
- ▶ If so, whether you are aware of any fertility issues you may have
  - Whether you have received fertility treatment (e.g. IVF) previously
  - If so, why previous treatment failed - this allows us to focus on
- ▶ finding the clinic and doctor with the right expertise for your specific case
- Your postcode, if location is a key factor when considering a
- ▶ fertility clinic.

2

Based on the information provided by you in Step 1, our medical advisor will send you a list of three recommended clinics and doctors.

3

If you would like to proceed with one of the recommended clinics/doctors, we can help you contact the clinic and book an appointment for you. This service is FREE.

4

Once an appointment is booked, we will guide you at every stage of your treatment, to help you achieve a successful outcome.

