

# What is follicle tracking & ovulation induction?



## Follicle tracking

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In a woman who is ovulating normally, an egg is released from one or other ovary during each cycle. Eggs develop inside fluid filled sacs, called follicles. These follicles reach a size of approximately 20mm prior to ovulation and can thus be seen with ultrasound scanning. Ultrasound can therefore be used to monitor and time ovulation.

As in most fertility centres, we use vaginal ultrasound scanning to monitor the growth of follicles. Most women find vaginal scanning quite comfortable.

Follicle tracking and TSI (timed sexual intercourse) are reliant upon the ovaries producing their own follicles, on the sperm being normal and on the fallopian tubes and pelvis also being normal. We are monitoring the cycle to judge the best time for intercourse. As the ovaries rarely produce more than one egg per natural cycle, there is a negligible chance of a multiple pregnancy.

Tracking is useful for couples who desire the minimal amount of assistance in becoming pregnant. However, it is not suitable for most infertility pathologies.

## Ovulation induction & superovulation

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Ovulation induction refers to the use of fertility drugs to induce ovulation in a woman who does not ovulate herself. The drugs used are Clomid tablets or injections of the hormone FSH ± LH. These same drugs may also be used in women who are ovulating themselves. The drugs therefore 'boost' ovulation and their use in these women is referred to as superovulation.

The dose of fertility drug used is critical and varies from woman to woman. Some women may over-respond to a particular dose while others may not respond at all. Therefore close monitoring of follicle (sac containing egg) development is necessary. This is done with transvaginal scanning. Once the follicles reach 18mm, ovulation is likely to occur within 48 hours. The couple is advised to have intercourse over the following days.