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## The half-price IVF that boosts chance of getting pregnant: New technique uses far fewer drugs and could be done during a woman's lunch hour

- New IVF treatment particularly effective for those aged 35-45
- Technique uses lower doses of drugs, yet is twice as effective
- Operation lasts only five minutes compared to traditional half-day

By [Sophie Borland](#)

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**Success treatment: The 'mini-IVF' has had twice the success rates as the conventional method**

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A half-price version of IVF that women could have in their lunch-hour has been shown to raise the chances of having a baby drastically.

It is particularly effective for those in their late 30s and early 40s and success rates are almost twice as high as the conventional fertility treatment.

The technique involves using far lower doses of drugs, with the result that it is not only far cheaper, but also has virtually no side effects.

Many women undergoing normal IVF suffer from mood swings, nausea and headaches.

In rare cases it can cause a life-threatening condition whereby their abdomen fills with fluid.

This new method, known as mini-IVF, involves giving women a daily pill for ten to 12 days which contains a low dose of the fertility drug clomid.

This encourages their ovaries to produce eggs and during this time the women undergo ultrasound scans every few days to check the eggs are developing healthily.

Once the eggs are large enough – around another ten days later – they are removed during a five-minute operation which does not require a general anaesthetic.

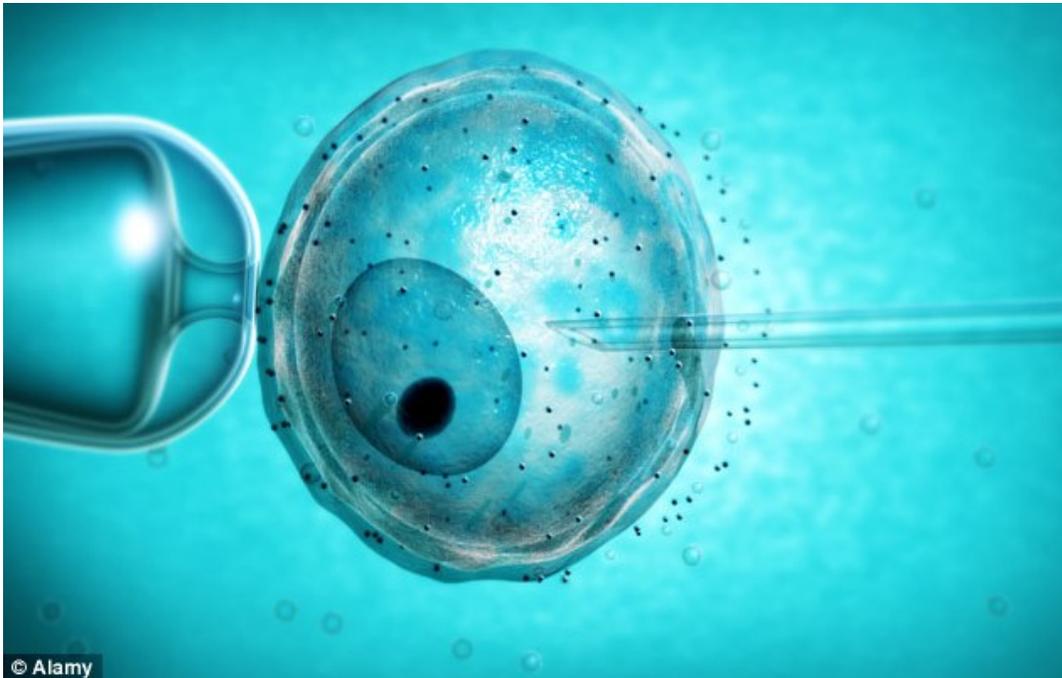
This means women can have it done before work, or during their lunch break, unlike normal IVF which lasts half a day and requires them to be put to sleep.

Doctors from St Louis, Missouri, who developed the method say it should be routinely offered to all women as it is cheaper, safer and a far more effective alternative.

Trials involving 520 women unveiled at the American Society for Reproductive Medicine conference in Boston showed that success rates for women over 35 were a third higher compared with those undergoing conventional IVF.

The results were even better among the over-40s – those using this new method were twice as likely to have a baby compared to if they had used the conventional fertility treatment.

Dr Sherman Silber, a fertility expert who helped develop the method, said it was so effective it offered women in their 40s the same chance of falling pregnant as those in their twenties.



**Too good to be true? The new IVF treatment is particularly effective for those in their late 30s and early 40s, using far lower doses of drugs, and also has virtually no side effects**

In women aged 35 or below, success rates are about the same as standard IVF but the researchers say they would also benefit from using it because it is far cheaper and has fewer side effects.

Dr Silber said: 'This is perfect for Britain and it would save an incredible amount of money. This is the magic solution.'

A course of mini-IVF costs between £1,200 and £1,800 compared with standard IVF which is between £3,000 and £4,000.

The reason it is so much cheaper is that it involves using far lower doses of the fertility drug clomid.

But this also makes it safer as large amounts of medication can lead to the deadly condition ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome whereby their abdomens fill with fluid – this occurs in 1 per cent of women having IVF.

One of main reasons women in their late 30s and early 40s have problems conceiving either naturally or with IVF is that they do not produce enough healthy eggs, capable of developing into an embryo and eventually a foetus.

In fact, the high dose fertility drugs used in conventional IVF worsen this problem as although they make a woman produce more eggs, they also appear to result in changes in the DNA of the eggs which make them defective.

But mini-IVF only uses very low doses of the drugs that do not make the woman's eggs less healthy.

Professor Geeta Nargund, a consultant gynaecologist at the London fertility clinic Create said: 'This study is a valuable addition to the growing evidence that mild stimulation IVF needs to become the first choice in IVF clinics for many women.'

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