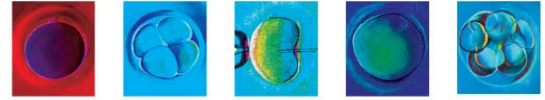


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FERTILITY FACT SHEET

San Ramon / Orinda / San Jose

The Safety of Progesterone

If you read the manufacturer's packet insert found with Progesterone –containing medications, you will see all the possible complications that can be caused by taking hormones during pregnancy. Needless to say, some of these are very frightening.

If Progesterone is so bad why do thousands of doctors, including us, and most IVF programs worldwide use Progesterone supplementation during the first three months of pregnancy? The fact is there are many different types of Progesterone and the kind that we have used today is quite different from what was prescribed in the past. In the late 1950's when researchers were gathering data on the correlation between Progesterone and birth defects, doctors were prescribing synthetic or laboratory produced hormones that were created from other compounds. A single study evaluating birth defects in women using synthetic Progesterone suggested a 3 in 1,000 increase in birth defects in women taking synthetic Progesterone during pregnancy.

However, the Progesterone medications we use today (injectable Progesterone in oil, vaginal progesterone suppositories/gel or injectable hydroxy progesterone caproate) are related to the naturally occurring Progesterone that a woman's body makes in the luteal phase of her menstrual cycle as well as during pregnancy. Studies done evaluating the risk of birth defects in women using natural Progesterone in pregnancy have not shown any increased risk of birth defects. In fact, the FDA has now approved at least 2 different forms of vaginal progesterone for the use in IVF cycles.

The decision to take any medication in pregnancy is a difficult one. No expectant mother wants to expose her child to danger. Progesterone use in IVF or injectable Medication cycles is important to provide the best possible uterine lining to allow a pregnancy to implant. Based on the available studies evaluating the use of the currently available natural Progesterone supplements in pregnancy, the risk is extremely small, if any. We advise the use of Progesterone supplementation in our program, when indicated, to give you your best chance for a successful and healthy pregnancy.