

Lipiodol (Poppyseed Oil) Flush

Poppy seed oil flush, also called the Lipiodol flush, is a minimally invasive procedure that can improve fertility. It involves introducing a special contrast agent made from iodized poppy seed oil into the uterus and fallopian tubes to enhance their function. Research suggests this treatment may increase pregnancy rates, especially in women with unexplained infertility or mild endometriosis.

How does it work?

Timed within your menstrual cycle between day 5-10, oil is gently flushed through the uterus and fallopian tubes. A thin tube (catheter) is threaded through your cervix and into your uterus where the Lipiodol is slowly injected. The oil is monitored via ultrasound or X-ray to ensure it passes through the uterus and your fallopian tubes and usually takes 15-30 minutes and can be performed without anaesthesia.

Potential Benefits

- **Increased Pregnancy Rates:** Studies show that the Lipiodol flush can significantly enhance pregnancy chances, particularly within the 6-month window following the procedure.
- **Clearing the Path:** The oil may clear minor blockages and improve the function of the fallopian tubes.
- **Improved Uterine Environment:** Lipiodol may have an anti-inflammatory effect and promote implantation.

Potential Risks

- Mild cramping during or after the procedure.
- Light spotting for a day or two.
- Rare allergic reactions to iodine or poppy seed oil.
- Temporary thyroid disturbance due to iodine content.
- A small risk of infection (antibiotics may be prescribed to prevent this).

How does it work?

This procedure is recommended in specific circumstances and not to every fertility patient. Generally women who have unexplained infertility, mild endometriosis or couples seeking non-invasive fertility enhancements before trying more complex treatments such as IVF.

Lipiodol flush is a low-risk, non-surgical option for improving fertility. It is often recommended before moving to more invasive fertility treatments. Speak with your fertility doctor to discuss whether the Lipiodol flush could benefit your individual situation.