

What is an adjuvant therapy?

Adjuvant therapy, also known as adjunct therapy, or 'add-ons', comprises a group of medical interventions that are given alone or in combination in addition to the standard IVF treatment. It is important to note that for many of these add-ons there is little or no evidence of their effectiveness to improve live birth rates. Nevertheless, your fertility specialist may decide to offer these treatments to individualise the care of your IVF treatment.

Monash IVF has made several fact sheets on add-ons to help you make a fully informed decision. Before you agree, you will need to weigh the evidence that this add-on may help you against the side effects it may cause, the known risks to mother and baby, as well as the extra costs.

Who may recommend an adjuvant therapy to you?

Your Fertility Specialist will discuss and recommend any adjuvant therapies they feel may be appropriate for the treatment you are going to undertake. If recommended, these therapies will be individualised to compliment your fertility treatment cycle.

Androderm Patch

What is Androderm Patch normally used for?

An Androderm patch is a medicated patch which contains testosterone. It is used for hormone replacement in men who are not able to produce enough testosterone. This medication is absorbed through the skin, enters your bloodstream, and helps your body reach normal testosterone levels.

Why is Androderm Patch used in IVF?

Testosterone has been used in IVF patients with the hope to improve the number and quality of the oocytes.

Will using Androderm Patch increase my chance of success?

There is evidence of only moderate quality that pre-IVF use of testosterone may be associated with higher live birth rates. In women with an 8% chance of live birth with placebo or no treatment, the live birth rate in women using testosterone will be between 10% and 32%. Some studies on which this evidence is based had methodological problems which make the evidence less reliable.

Is the use of Androderm Patch in IVF an off-label prescription?

Yes, Androderm® is an off-label prescription. This means its use in IVF is not an authorised use of this medication.

Are there any side effects and risks with using Androderm Patch?

Common side effects can include:

- redness, itching, burning, irritation, or hardened skin where the skin patch is worn
- breast swelling and tenderness
- increased acne or hair growth
- headache
- depressed mood
- changes in sex drive

Risks are mainly associated with longer term use. Testosterone therapy should be avoided in women who have or have had breast or uterine cancer, have high cholesterol or heart disease, or have liver disease.

Are there any risks to the safety of a baby by using Androderm Patch during pregnancy?

Testosterone is a Category D drug. It should be avoided during pregnancy and breastfeeding. Category D drugs have caused, are suspected to have caused or may be expected to cause, an increased incidence of human fetal malformations or irreversible damage.

Women should avoid the use of testosterone during pregnancy because it introduces the risk of the development of male traits in a female fetus.

What are the costs?

Your Fertility Specialist will provide you with a prescription to obtain any medications which have been prescribed to you. The cost of these medications may vary from pharmacy to pharmacy, however these costs are in addition to your treatment cycle.

What do I do if I have more questions?

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact your Fertility Specialist.