



The Patient Newsletter of the Center for Women's Reproductive Care at Columbia University

The Benefits of Advanced Treatment



Mark V. Sauer, M.D.
Program Director

Undergoing fertility treatment can be daunting to say the least. The process is stressful by nature, and patients feel pressure on many fronts, from financial costs to timing factors to the demands of the process on body and soul. And many feel anxious as they choose their provider and treatment plan.

First Step: Seek Assistance from Your Primary Caregiver
Consult your primary doctor or OB/GYN specialist first if you have

difficulty conceiving. A preliminary evaluation by a physician can lead to treatments for basic impediments, such as ovulation induction without intensive monitoring or surgeries to correct endometriosis, mild tubal disease or leiomyomas.

When Focused Subspecialty Care is Needed

Couples who are not succeeding with basic treatment or want in-depth attention, diagnosis and counseling usually turn to a "subspecialty" practice like CWRC. These practices work exclusively with advanced reproductive treatments and are staffed with physicians, nurses, social workers and laboratory staff that specialize in infertility treatment, to provide the most modern care.

"Subspecialty" practices offer benefits for patients at all levels of treatment. For example, at CWRC we spend 30 minutes to an hour with patients during the initial consultation, going over details of lab work and treatment options. Next, focused testing is performed on site by professionals trained to interpret and then communicate the results to patients. And since infertility treatment is the exclusive focus of our practice, we operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, giving patients scheduling convenience as well as optimal timing for their procedures.

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CWRC Expands to Westchester



CWRC is pleased to announce the opening of our new Columbia University Westchester Campus, conveniently located in White Plains with ample free parking. This is great news for patients in the area, since the new office provides consultations, daily monitoring and inseminations, saving time and reducing commuting hassle. Patients only need to travel to the Manhattan Campus for egg retrieval, embryo transfer and weekend or holiday monitoring.

The Westchester Campus is designed to make services more accessible while maintaining the same standard of excellence, managed care coverage and financial assistance. Dr. Melvin Thornton, formerly our Manhattan Campus Medical Director, is now Medical Director of the new facility, and will oversee operations daily. Our other Manhattan physicians will see patients in the Westchester Campus on a rotational basis as well.

For an appointment at either campus, call 1-646-756-8282.

To learn more, call our admissions counselor at 1-646-756-8294 or visit www.columbiafertility.org

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CWRC Group and Individual Counseling Offers Emotional Support



CWRC Social Workers Tara Foley, Joy Meyers and Sharon Eyny are here to help

At a large center like CWRC, there's no need to experience the stress and anxiety of treatment alone. To help patients struggling with the emotional challenges of infertility, we have three licensed social workers on staff. They are available to talk informally and can schedule counseling sessions to help individuals and couples manage bumps in the road.

Recently, CWRC also began hosting group counseling sessions to offer patients additional support because talking about common

experiences with fellow patients and their partners diminishes the isolation most people feel during treatment. And it's often a useful forum for learning more about CWRC and fertility management.

We currently host groups for short or long term support. Each session is moderated by a licensed social worker. Our Tuesday night support group is open to all patients and partners. Additional group topics will be starting soon, and pre-registration is required because the sessions are well attended. To register or hear about current topics, call 1-646-756-8294.

For patients seeking more intensive help, CWRC psychiatrist Linda Mullen, MD is available for individual and couples counseling sessions. Dr. Mullen is Director of Women's Mental Health and Assistant Professor of Clinical Psychiatry at Columbia University. For information or to schedule an appointment with Dr. Mullen, contact her office directly at 212-362-0142.

To learn more, join a group or seek counseling with a social worker, contact our Admissions Counselor at 1-646-756-8294.

Challenging Case Study: A New Procedure Brings Success

At 32, Melissa had been trying to become pregnant with her 33 year-old husband Paul for over a year. An initial evaluation with their family doctor revealed that Paul did not produce sperm in his semen (azospermia). Their doctor advised they'd need to adopt or use sperm donation. They sought a second opinion at CWRC.

The CWRC evaluation discovered Paul possesses a cystic fibrosis gene mutation (Delta 508) which caused him to lack a vas deferens, the tube connecting the testes to the urethra. In other respects, his workup was considered normal. Our physicians recommended attempting a relatively new procedure known as TESE, which stands for testicular sperm extraction. Under anesthesia and using a needle



biopsy, a small amount of testicular tissue is removed and examined under the microscope for the presence of sperm.

Since most sperm residing in the testicle are immature and non-motile, it takes great expertise to identify viable spermatozoa within the cellular matter extracted. Sperm can then be placed directly into the patient's eggs using intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI),

a type of in vitro fertilization, to create embryos.

The couple elected to undergo TESE with IVF/ICSI which resulted in the fertilization of 8 eggs. Three embryos were suitable for transfer. A normal pregnancy was established, resulting in the delivery of a healthy seven pound baby girl by cesarean section.

This newsletter is published periodically by The Center for Women's Reproductive Care at Columbia University
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The Commitment of a Subspecialty Practice

As a practice focused exclusively on fertility, CWRC is able to provide state-of-the-art, modernized services based on advanced clinical knowledge and laboratory techniques. CWRC physicians are full-time faculty members at the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University, and participate in research, teaching and clinical care.

Drawing on this expertise, CWRC often expedites patient care and shortens the time to pregnancy. Upon achieving pregnancy, early monitoring is handled by our physicians until routine obstetrical services are in order, at which point the patient's personal providers resume care.

A Special Focus on Difficult Cases

As a practice with the technology and skill to assist the most difficult cases, CWRC is committed to accepting all patients that we believe have a valid chance of achieving pregnancy. This means CWRC often considers women for whom advanced reproductive age, a diminished ovarian reserve, past poor treatment cycles, medical history or an elevated FSH level indicates a lesser chance of success.

According to a recent survey, challenging cases such as these comprise more than one-third of the CWRC practice, a percentage greater than twice the number seen in most other subspecialty offices. Treating a wide range of cases is central to the Columbia University teaching mission.



CONTACT THE CENTER FOR WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE CARE AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Insurances accepted upon verification:
Aetna/US Healthcare, Cigna, Blue Cross Blue Shield, GHI,
Healthnet, Oxford, United Healthcare and POMCO.
Patient financing is also available.

**The Center is offering
one-time introductory fees:
\$6,950 for IVF Cycle***

Manhattan Campus
1790 Broadway at 58th Street, 2nd Floor, NY, NY 10019
Westchester Campus
244 Westchester Ave. West, White Plains, NY 10604

For an appointment call 1-646-756-8282.
To learn more about fertility treatment,
call our Admissions Counselor at
1-646-756-8294.
or visit www.columbiafertility.org

*Introductory prices do not include:
required screening before beginning a cycle or if required as part of the cycle,
medications, assisted hatching, micromanipulation/ICSI or cryopreservation.
Offer available through August 30, 2006.

Q&A With the Center's Medical Staff

When should I start "subspecialty" treatment?

First, go to your primary caregiver to meet your insurance coverage requirements and address basic problems. If your case presents challenges or you wish to maximize your available time and coverage, next consult a subspecialist like CWRC to optimize your chances. After becoming pregnant, your care will return to your usual providers. If you don't currently have an OB/GYN, you can choose one in the Columbia University system.

Do CWRC physicians have special certifications?

Our physicians are not only board certified in the general specialty of OB/GYN, but also in the subspecialty of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility (REI). These credentials require completion of a 4-year OB/GYN residency followed by an additional 3-year fellowship in REI as well as written and oral exams in both areas.

Does your entire staff specialize in infertility?

Yes. Our staff includes nurses, social workers and administrators, all specifically trained to help patients go through fertility treatments. At every step of the process, patients can feel confident they will receive assistance from experts working within a caring environment.

Why are 7-day-a-week office hours important?

Put simply, your fertility doesn't take weekends or holidays off. Neither does our staff. Ovulation induction, intrauterine inseminations, IVF and embryo transfer require precise timing and often occur on weekends. So access to 365-day-a-year operations is essential for obtaining good outcomes.

CENTER SPOTLIGHT ON...

A Medical Director on the Leading Edge



*Michael Guarnaccia, M.D.
CWRC Medical Director*

Meet Michael M. Guarnaccia, MD, recently appointed as Medical Director at our Manhattan Campus. In addition to overseeing patient care, Dr. Guarnaccia will also lead our new Pre-Implantation Genetic Diagnosis (PGD) program.

Dr. Guarnaccia describes PGD as “an important technology innovation to assist couples with genetic causes for infertility.” PGD identifies genetic abnormalities prior to implantation and may improve pregnancy rates in certain couples.

It assists in embryo selection by sorting out genetically abnormal embryos that otherwise appear normal under the microscope.

Dr. Guarnaccia was recruited from the well-respected IVF program of Harvard University located at the Brigham and Women’s Hospital. He is highly experienced in all aspects of assisted reproductive care, including surgery and PGD.

As Medical Director, Dr. Guarnaccia works closely with the entire staff, overseeing treatment and helping optimize the experience of each patient. He sees patients, handles questions and concerns, ensures the timeliness of procedures and consults on cases as a senior physician.

Dr. Guarnaccia completed his Residency in OB/GYN at the New York Hospital/Cornell Medical Center. He then completed a fellowship in Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility at the Yale New Haven Hospital.

Why leave Massachusetts to join Columbia University and CWRC? “It’s the quality of the institution,” he explains. “CWRC is on the forefront of advances in reproductive medicine. Everyone here is committed to enhancing patient care.”

Married with three children, Dr. Guarnaccia also enjoyed bringing his family to his old stomping grounds. “It’s good to be in New York, the city where I trained professionally. I enjoy the diversity of New York and its people. The city has so much to offer.”

For more on Dr. Guarnaccia and the PGD Program, visit www.columbiafertility.org

Renewed Financial Assistance for IVF

CWRC is pleased to announce that it has been awarded a grant by the New York State Department of Health Infertility Demonstration Program for the third straight year. Through this award, individuals with insurance but without full infertility coverage can obtain financial support for an IVF Cycle from the State of New York.

To qualify assistance, a patient must be a New York State resident between the ages of 21-44, be clinically infertile and meet certain other clinical and program criteria. Financial support is available on a sliding scale basis. Patients interested in determining whether they are eligible for the program should contact the CWRC Admissions Counselor at 1-646-756-8294.

CWRC Program Director Named Best of New York 8 Years Running

Congratulations are due to Dr. Mark V. Sauer, the CWRC Program Director, named once again by New York Magazine and Castle Connolly to the Best Doctors of New York list. He has been cited annually since the inception of this list 8 years ago. Few other New York medical specialists have earned such a long tenure on the well-regarded and relied-upon report.



*The 2005 CWRC Kiddie Carnival Celebration—
A Reunion of Families Achieved Through IVF*