

Progesterone for Recurrent Pregnancy Loss

Progesterone is a hormone that is secreted by the ovaries after ovulation to support implantation and early pregnancy development. Some people with short luteal phases or a history of early pregnancy losses may benefit from additional progesterone starting in the luteal phase of their menstrual cycle. Supplemental progesterone can be given by mouth, vaginally, or as an intramuscular injection. Before starting additional progesterone, make sure you take the time to speak with your ARC Care Team about the risks and benefits and whether it is right for you.

How do I know when to start taking my Luteal Phase Progesterone?

In order to know when to start your progesterone, you also need to know when you are starting to ovulate. To determine this, we ask that you monitor your cycle using LH sticks (sometimes called LH Kits or Ovulation Predictor Kits/Sticks), which measure the amount of LH in your urine. LH is a hormone that rises to trigger ovulation. We do not recommend relying on a period tracking app alone to determine your progesterone start date. LH sticks can be purchased over the counter from any Pharmacy, including the ARC Pharmacy. Be wary of very inexpensive online or dollar store versions as they may not be reliable. Remember, when counting the days of your cycle, Day 1 is the first day of the full flow of your period. Starting Day 10 of your cycle (or as per the instructions from your ARC Care Team), you can start doing one LH stick each morning (preferably with your first morning urine as this is very concentrated). There is no need to test more frequently than that. Once the LH stick is positive, the best days to have intercourse (sex) to conceive are that day and the following day. Three days after the positive LH test, you should start taking your luteal progesterone medication.

What do I do after I start taking my Progesterone?

Like any medication, it is important to take your progesterone as prescribed by your Physician. For most people, this will mean taking it for 14 days and then doing a home pregnancy test. If the test is negative, you can stop the progesterone and wait for your period to come. If your pregnancy test is positive, please be sure to notify ARC right away so we can send you for a pregnancy blood test. People who get pregnant while taking progesterone supplementation will continue their medications until 10 weeks of pregnancy.

What are the side effects of supplemental Progesterone?

Progesterone can exacerbate many of the side effects that people feel during their luteal phase of the menstrual cycle or in early pregnancy. The most common side effects include fatigue, breast tenderness, mood changes, bloating, and vaginal discharge. Cervical irritation causing spotting can occur following the insertion of some medications including vaginal progesterone suppositories which is not concerning.



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If you have questions, please contact us via
your Patient Portal or contact your Patient
Care Coordinator directly.

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What if I start bleeding before it is time for me to do my pregnancy test?

Some people will get their period even before the 14 days of progesterone have passed. In those cases, we still recommend continuing the progesterone until a home pregnancy test can pick up the pregnancy hormone then performing one at home. Sometimes early pregnancy bleeding can look and feel a lot like a period. If your pregnancy test is negative, you can stop the luteal progesterone, even if it has not been 14 days yet.

We know that this can be a difficult and stressful time. So much of this process is focused on your body, so it can be difficult to care for your emotional well-being and mental health as well. If you are struggling with grief, loss, anxiety, stress, feeling low, relationship difficulties, family conflict, or anything else, we are here to help. We have a Registered Psychologist to give you a safe space to talk through what this has been like for you and to work on strategies to move forward. Please speak to your ARC Care Team if you are interested in further support.



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