

## Where have you been?

If you have decided not to tell your colleagues about your IVF treatment you will also need to practise explaining your absence to well-intentioned colleagues. Remember: just because someone asks you a question, it doesn't mean you have to answer it fully. You might say you had an appointment and leave it at that. If they persist you can say that it's private and you'd rather not discuss it. Remember, it's your choice.

## Are you being a good boss to yourself?

Some people are harder on themselves than any boss, or colleague would ever be. Does that sound like you? Are you working late, not taking holidays, or are you taking on extra responsibilities? Sometimes you need to be kind to yourself – switch off that computer and go home. Work will still be there the next day.

If you can arrange it, a holiday or an extended weekend break with your partner, or friends, might be just what you need to maintain high spirits.

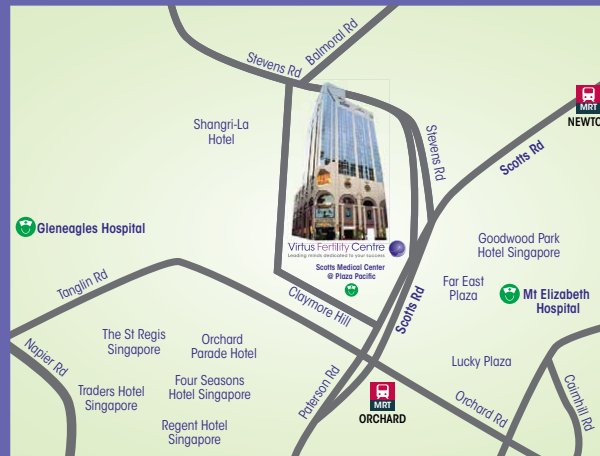
## More information

Virtus Fertility Centre can facilitate a counselling appointment for you either prior to treatment, during or after. Support is available and encouraged.



## Virtus Fertility Centre

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## Find us

MRT Station Nearest is Orchard MRT Station  
Bus Stop Alight @ Royal Plaza Hotel  
Bus Nos. 5, 54, 124, 128, 143, 162, 162M, 167, 171, 700, 700A, NR1, NR2, NR3  
Parking Available in the basement of Pacific Plaza  
\*Entrance via Claymore Hill

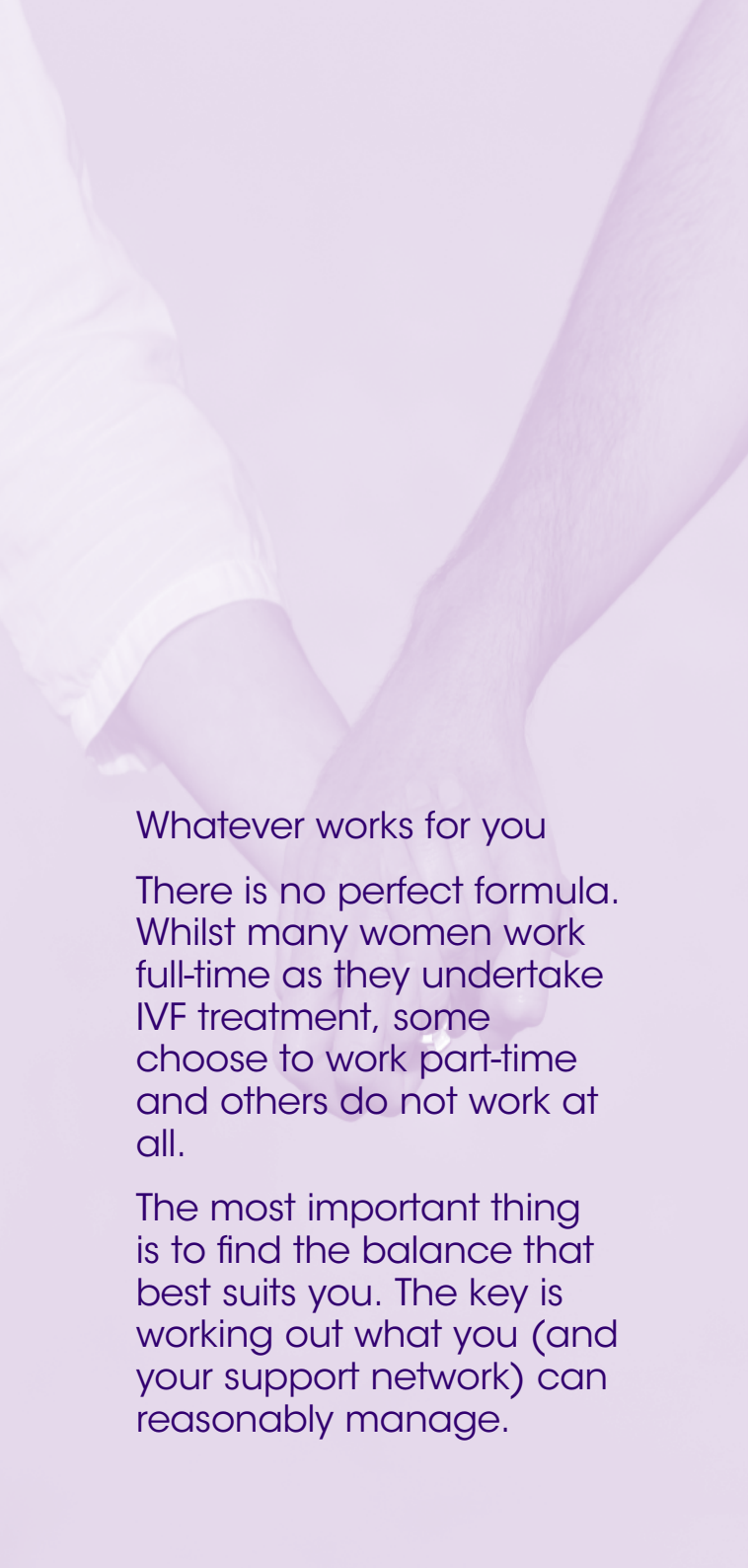
## Balancing Work & IVF



[virtusfertilitycentre.com.sg](http://virtusfertilitycentre.com.sg)



**VirtusFertilityCentre**  
A MEMBER OF VIRTUS HEALTH



Whatever works for you  
There is no perfect formula.  
Whilst many women work  
full-time as they undertake  
IVF treatment, some  
choose to work part-time  
and others do not work at  
all.

The most important thing  
is to find the balance that  
best suits you. The key is  
working out what you (and  
your support network) can  
reasonably manage.

### Can you fit it all in?

Your IVF treatment regime requires a considerable time commitment from you. Now is probably not the ideal time for taking on extra work responsibilities or study. Even have a look at the household chores, maybe you could do with some extra help at this time?

### Put yourself first

People often attempt to put work before their own needs and this can lead to over-commitment, stress and exhaustion. You need to stay healthy and fit so you can continue with treatment and perform well in your job. It's all about balance.

Ensure you eat well, sleep, exercise, allow down time with your friends and family (and of course your partner). Consider accessing our counselling team and their advice on putting yourself in the best emotional and physical position.

Looking after yourself will help you function more effectively in all aspects of your life. Prevention is always better than cure.

### To tell or not to tell?

This is a very individual decision for which you will need to carefully weigh up the pros and cons of who you share your treatment journey with. Your choice will depend on your own personality, the nature of your relationships at work and how you feel you can deal with people on a daily basis.

Some people prefer not to disclose any information at all in their workplace. Others feel the pressure of keeping their treatment a secret and opt to tell their manager only. Perhaps you will also choose to share news of your treatment with a few close colleagues. Possibly, you'll feel like telling the world.

Be very careful. Ask yourself: Can I trust my boss or colleagues to keep this information confidential? Will it be easier for me if they know about my situation? Or will it be harder?

Being open may bring you added emotional support. However, you can't be sure how others will respond. If you are unsure about telling your colleagues, perhaps test the waters first. Impart a small amount of information and gauge how they respond and how you feel. If it's positive, you can choose to tell more. If not, you have your answer.

### Educate them

If you do decide to be open at work, you will likely be fielding all sorts of questions about the more detailed aspects of IVF. Many people's knowledge of IVF is limited to what they have learned from media reports.

Consider providing literature from the clinic or website for your manager or colleagues to read. [virtusfertilitycentre.com.sg](http://virtusfertilitycentre.com.sg)

Be clear that your personal information is confidential. Take the opportunity to let people know how you would prefer them to treat you. They may be very

concerned for you but uncomfortable about raising the subject of your IVF treatment. Do you want them to ask how treatment is going or would you prefer to raise the topic when you wish to discuss it?

### Communicate, communicate

Should you choose to be open with your employer, communicating with them regularly can benefit you both immensely. The time you need off work is probably a lot less than your employer may expect.

Whenever possible, clinic appointments are scheduled around your work commitments. Still, there will be days when you need to take some time off work (eg. for the egg collection procedure).

Provide as much warning as possible of the dates you may be absent. If you have any important work dates or travel commitments, then inform your nursing team at the beginning of your treatment cycle. Perhaps your medication can be modified to suit your timetable. If not, ask your nursing team for approximate dates and times to help with planning your work schedule.

Your employer is more likely to be supportive if you demonstrate that you will always try to fit your treatment around your work commitments, that you value your job and the support from within your workplace.

### The tea room chatter

The work tea room is one place where separating your personal and work lives is likely to be a challenge. Working with pregnant colleagues or sitting through conversations about colleagues' children can be difficult.

You may be asked intrusive questions you don't wish to answer such as *When are you going to start a family?* Prepare yourself for these situations. Practise changing the topic or giving "off the cuff" answers.

Allow yourself to make a hasty exit if you need to. Change the scenery – go for a walk outside or lunch with a supportive friend. It's not avoidance – it's being kind to yourself.

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