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# HEALTH SHOTS

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## When Summer Comes Calling...

Learn how you can keep your child cool and comfortable.

## The ART of Choosing an IVF Centre

With so many choices around, which centre is the best choice for you?





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# Editor's Note

## Dear Readers,

It is with great joy that I welcome you on board *Health Shots* - a special monthly magazine launched by BloomLife Hospital Pvt. Ltd. We hope this magazine will serve as a source of information, insights and inspiration to guide you towards good health in all ways.

BloomLife Hospital recently completed **15** years of service in the healthcare space. Along the journey, as doctors, and as individuals who have our own health and our families' health to look after, we have come to understand how important it is to pay attention, to 'listen' to our bodies.

We are all aware that good health habits, when inculcated and sustained in the long run, can help us in many ways - from reducing the risk of chronic illnesses to helping us enjoy better health into our senior years. Yes, we all have extremely busy lives, but we owe it to ourselves to follow the basics at the very least: A nutritious diet, regular exercise and uninterrupted sleep for at least seven hours each night.

While doing all of this, gaining some understanding of common health issues can help us 'up' our game. When we are aware of the causes behind health issues, we can actively try and avoid them. If we are aware of the first symptoms that crop up, we may pay closer attention and seek medical help in good time.

However, with a plethora of information available online and on social media channels, it is important that we sift out half-truths and exaggerations, and take the time to verify the source before imbibing the information shared.



This was the seed of a thought that led us to bring out *Health Shots*, a forum where authentic, credible information can be shared. More importantly, we wanted it to be a space where we can address your queries and doubts - in full.

I hope you enjoy this first issue - and keep coming back for more! You can pick up hard copies at our hospital, or read the magazine online at [www.bloomlifehospital.com](http://www.bloomlifehospital.com). And don't forget to send your feedback, thoughts, questions and suggestions to [info@bloomhealthcare.in](mailto:info@bloomhealthcare.in).

Here's to your good health!

**Dr. Kavitha Gautham**

*Managing Director, BloomLife Hospital Pvt. Ltd.*

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# The ART of choosing AN IVF CENTRE



**Dr. Aravind Ravichandran**

Consultant - Reproductive Medicine & Fertility  
BloomLife Hospital

*Every couple who is looking at fertility treatment wants to choose a centre that provides expert service, empathetic care and, more importantly, results. While the last aspect is not something any centre can actually guarantee, it is essential that you choose a centre that checks off some important factors. What are those?*

**W**e are seeing a spurt in fertility centres not only in major metros but also in smaller cities. However, the greater the choices, the more confused many couples are when it comes to choosing a centre.

Moreover, the topic of IVF is still a sensitive one in many families. It is not easy for couples to share with their parents and relatives that they are going in for assisted fertility, leave alone the choice of a centre. So, many people tend to go by advertisements, or choose an IVF centre that is close to their home.

The choice of the doctor and hospital / centre is a very important decision in your journey towards starting a family. So, it is essential that you look into some key factors about the centre and its doctors and medical staff before making a decision.

**History and set-up of the IVF centre:** Look into when the IVF centre was established. A longstanding centre is usually one that has sustained and grown to provide full-fledged services to patients. Also, find out if the centre has all the needed facilities that you will be using through the course of treatment (including lab and scans) in one place.

**The doctors and staff:** Read up on the doctors, technicians and embryologists who are part of the centre, and look into their



qualifications and experience. If this information is not available on the centre's website, ask the hospital or centre to share it with you.

**Recommendations:** Ask your family members and friends if they or anyone they know has been there and what their experience was like. Look into Google reviews and testimonials as well.

**Comfort level with the centre and the doctor:** When you go for your first appointment, spend time looking around the centre. Have an open, free conversation with the doctor and ask them all the questions you have. Keep the focus on getting complete answers that are honest and transparent. It is perfectly okay to ask "sensitive" questions - including about the success rate of IVF at their centre.

**Link between the IVF centre and your obstetrician:** To many people, conceiving through IVF and going through the pregnancy and delivery are seen as two different processes. Hence, they may choose an IVF centre that is completely unconnected to the hospital where they will have their delivery. However, at a later date, when the gynaecologist / obstetrician wishes to get some more details from the person's case records, they may find it difficult to access it on time. So, keep in touch with your IVF specialist even after you conceive, and request them to share information with your doctor as needed. ♦

# Do adults need to get **VACCINATED?**

**Dr. Aiswarya Nair**, Consultant - General Medicine  
BloomLife Hospital

*In line with World Immunization Week (24 to 30 April), we address a common myth that vaccines are meant primarily for children. Truth is, adults do require vaccines to protect them from a range of health issues – we tell you the what and why of it all.*



**B**abies alone are not susceptible to infections and diseases. All of us are, at all ages.

Vaccines work by harnessing our immune system's natural ability to detect and destroy disease-causing germs, and then helping our body to 'remember' the best way to fight these germs in the future. As we mark World Immunisation Week (April 24 to 30), let us look at some important vaccines that adults should consider getting.

Before you take a vaccine, inform your doctor if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, on medication for chronic illness or if you are facing any long-term health issues. Also, if you face any side-effects after taking a vaccine, such as rashes, persistent headache, dizziness or vomiting, contact your doctor immediately.

## **Routine Vaccines**

### *Cervical Cancer Vaccine:*

Cervical cancer, caused by the Human Papillomavirus (HPV), is the second most common cancer among women worldwide. It is spread primarily by sexual contact, but factors such as poor genital hygiene, long-term use of hormonal contraceptives, early onset of sexual activity, multiple sex partners, heavy smoking, and immunosuppression play a part. The risk of cervical cancer can be greatly reduced by taking the HPV vaccine. The first dose of the vaccine can be given to girls after they have completed 9 years of age.

### *Flu Vaccine:*

Flu (or influenza) can lead to serious complications such as pneumonia, especially in older adults. The flu shot can be given

after a child turns 6 months of age, and all adults can get it. It is recommended that the shot be taken once a year to keep up immunity - particularly if a person has a chronic health condition like heart disease or diabetes.

### *Hepatitis B Vaccine:*

Hepatitis refers to the inflammation of the liver, caused by Hepatitis A, B and C viruses. At present, there are vaccines only to prevent Hepatitis A and B. The Hepatitis B vaccine is highly recommended for healthcare workers and public safety workers, who are exposed to blood or to persons with the infection. People who are sexually active, injection drug users, people with end-stage renal disease and HIV-infected persons are also advised to get vaccinated. The vaccine is given to people over the age of 19.

## **Non-Routine Vaccines**

### *Typhoid Vaccine:*

Typhoid (or typhoid fever) is caused by a bacteria called Salmonella Typhi, which is spread through contaminated food and water. The vaccine can be given after the age of 9 months. Adults may consider getting a vaccine at any age.

### *Varicella Vaccine:*

In adults, the varicella zoster virus (which leads to chicken pox) can cause shingles, an infection that causes a painful rash characterised by a strip of tiny blisters. The condition can be treated, but the pain may persist even after the blisters subside. If a person's family members have shingles, they should consider getting the vaccine. ♦

# WHEN SUMMER COMES CALLING...



**Dr. D. Balakumaran**  
Head of Paediatrics & Neonatology  
BloomLife Hospital

*...Keep your baby cool – in all ways! And no, you don't need a shower of prickly heat powder for that. Read on to know more about easy ways to keep your child in good health and spirits through the searing heat.*

**P**arents, you are probably busy planning activities to keep their children occupied – to keep them out of your hair and out of the summer heat! Here are some important tips to keep in mind to cover your child's health and well-being.

**Use sunscreen:** If your child is over three years of age, get them a child-friendly sunscreen and apply it on them 20 minutes before they go out in the sun. A child's skin is tender and can suffer sunburns easily if not protected. Check with your paediatrician on safe ingredients and usage.

**Step out after the sun goes down:** While it is prudent to keep your child indoors during the mornings and afternoons, do encourage your child to step out and engage in outdoor play in the evenings. It helps get a much-needed dose of exercise and fresh air.

**Don't use prickly heat powder:** Using prickly heat powder (especially on children under the age of 12 years) may clog sweat pores and cause inflammation of the sweat ducts. Dress your child in cotton clothes and encourage them to bathe twice a day in lukewarm (not hot) water. Also, avoid putting home remedies or body cream on skin rashes – this may aggravate it.

**Keep hydration as a priority:** Children may sweat profusely and may not be able to signal when the first signs of thirst hits them. So, encourage your child to drink plenty of water. Give them regular doses of fresh coconut water, and choose cut fruits over juice. Also, include water-rich vegetables like cucumbers, tomatoes and white pumpkin in their meals.

**Keep a watch on junk food intake:** Binge-eating is not just harmful in the short term with regard to excess weight gain, it can also lead to detrimental food habits in the long run. Have a conversation with your child about how they can balance their intake of comfort foods and nutritious meals. More importantly, lead by example!

**Check your child's vaccination schedule:** Before the summer vacation and travel plans kick in, check with your paediatrician as to which vaccines are due in the immediate term, and plan them accordingly.

**Look out for these warning signs:** Skin rashes, urinary irritation and constipation – these are the three warning signs that you should look out for in your child. They could be an indication of dehydration, and need to be addressed immediately. Consult your paediatrician as soon as you notice any of these signs. ♦





# Handling Osteoporosis

*Osteoporosis, which means 'porous bone', is a bone disease due to which the bones become weak and break due to even a small bump. Women in particular are most vulnerable to osteoporosis, particularly after they experience menopause. So, how can we address and handle this condition?*



**Dr. K. Chittaranjan**  
Medical Director and Head of Orthopaedics  
BloomLife Hospital

Every individual's calcium metabolism is determined by their body's rate of calcium and bone development and depletion. For every bone cell that depletes, newer ones replace them. Osteoporosis is a condition that is characterised by the thinning of bones, which results from changes in the balance between the amount of new bone that is formed within the body and the amount of bone that is broken down and assimilated. When a person is affected by osteoporosis, their bones become more porous and weaker. These lighter, more fragile bones are more vulnerable to fractures from even minor traumas and stresses.

While both men and women may experience this condition, it is more commonly seen in women. This is because, after menopause (or a hysterectomy), women experience a major change in hormonal secretion, which ultimately causes cell replacement to deteriorate - thereby making them more vulnerable to osteoporosis.

One of the best ways to address osteoporosis is to ensure that there is sufficient calcium intake. Foods with high calcium content - including dairy products, crustaceans (crabs) and green beans - should be made a regular part of one's diet. Health drinks can also be a part of one's routine diet. However, food alone may not be sufficient to ensure adequate calcium supply, so calcium supplements may be taken. The quantity, type and frequency of dosage of supplements should be fixed after consultation with the doctor.

An important factor that affects our body's calcium absorption is our store of vitamin D, which is produced by our body when our skin is exposed to sunlight. Taking walks in the morning and soaking in the sun's rays is one measure. Adding foods such as fatty fish (salmon, mackerel and tuna), egg yolks, cheese, mushrooms, and milk can also help. If the deficiency is severe, supplements have to be prescribed by the doctor after a thorough analysis. ♦





# Cut the risk of UTI

*Urinary tract infections can be a pesky affair! Keep them at bay by following these simple tips.*



**Dr. Kavitha Gautham**

Senior Consultant - Reproductive Medicine & High Risk Obstetrics  
BloomLife Hospital

**H**ow much water do you drink in a day? You might say, “Quite a lot” or “X bottles”, but do you know how to check if you are sufficiently hydrated?

Here is a simple test: If your urine is completely clear, without any tinge of yellow in it, you can be rest assured you are drinking a sufficient amount of water.

Why am I telling you this? Because lack of hydration is one the biggest contributors to urinary tract infection (UTI). When we don't drink enough water, our urine tends to get concentrated in the kidney, and could turn into a source of infection.

There are other sources of UTIs as well. One could contract an infection from using common/public toilets. Also, sexually active adults run the risk of contracting an infection from their partners. Another contributing factor is lack of personal hygiene, which could lead to higher exposure to sources of infection.

Urinary tract infections have some prominent symptoms: A burning sensation while urinating; a strong urge to urinate often, and passing of small amounts of urine; passing urine that is cloudy, red, bright pink or dark and/or gives off a small strong smell; pelvic pain.

If you suspect you have a UTI, contact your doctor immediately. The source of the infection will be detected through a test, and you may be put on a course of medicines to address it. The medication will curb the infection within a few days.

However, if you are suffering from repetitive episodes of UTI, you have to take some basic steps to prevent its recurrence.

- Drink plenty of water (three to four litres a day)
- When using common/public toilets, use a disposable toilet cover (if you can) or wipe down the seat with tissue and a bit of hand sanitiser
- If you are sexually active, warn your partner if you are dealing with an infection so that they are not affected - and resume sexual relations after you are fully cured
- Make sure your private hygiene is well taken care of

As with all health issues, prevention is better than cure - but if an issue does arise, please make sure you contact a doctor immediately. Denial and delay are the worst enemies of good health, so keep them at bay! ♦

# I'm waiting...

Anita Krishnaswamy, CEO, BloomLife Hospital

## *Your questions about why things happen the way they do in a hospital – answered.*

**I am a pregnant woman in my second trimester. I was given an appointment to meet with the OBGYN doctor at 11 a.m., but I got to meet the doctor only after three hours! Why can't the staff give appointments in a more orderly manner, keeping in mind the doctor's schedule?**

When I read this question, I was struck by a thought: The word 'waiting' takes on so many different meanings, depending on our view of a situation. It is a pleasure when we wait for something like a celebration, or meeting with a friend, loved one or significant other. We wait patiently, for months even, for a special dress or bag to go on sale!

However, when it comes to waiting for a doctor to attend to us, we become impatient, even annoyed. *After all, when it comes to our health, we want the issue to be addressed at the earliest.* I used to experience the same feelings when I used to go to the doctor, particularly during my two pregnancies. *What on earth could the doctor be doing that delays them for so long?*

If you could peep over the other side of the door, you would see that a doctor has dozens of issues, each one demanding priority. In a hospital set-up, each doctor has a structure with time slots for scheduled surgeries and procedures, OP appointments, IP patients, and possible emergencies as well. Over and above this, there are unscheduled OP appointments and emergency cases that require

urgent medical attention (including surgery). On some days, all things may go wrong – at the same time! These are the days, when despite best efforts on part of the doctor and the staff members, the patient faces an incessantly long waiting period.

In all of this, the doctors have to keep their calm, mentally compartmentalise the issues, and attend to the patient – which involves looking at multiple factors (case history, symptoms, any unusual signs, specific issues and so on). They have to be alert and observant at all times, because there is – literally – no room for error.

If we are able to empathise with the doctors for the immense juggling they do, we might be able to handle the frustration of extended waiting hours with patience and calmness.

I am not saying that you should put up with long waiting hours without saying anything at all. Far from it! At any point, if you are feeling uncomfortable or have pressing matters to attend to, please approach the Guest Relations Officer or Staff Nurse on duty and explain to them what your issue is. They will see how best they can resolve your issue.

We are here to help you feel better and enjoy good health. When you trust us to do just that, you will find that it is an enjoyable journey for all! ♦

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*If you are facing a non-clinical, hospital-related issue that you want help or guidance with, write to us at [ceo@bloomhealthcare.in](mailto:ceo@bloomhealthcare.in) – and we will answer it in this column.*



# The Bystander's Dilemma

Samuel Abraham, Legal Advisor  
BloomLife Hospital



*There are some fine lines where medical and legal aspects cross – we break them down and give you a balanced insight.*

**If I see someone being hurt and lying on the road, can I help by taking him/her to the hospital? Will I incur any legal issues by doing so?**

If a road accident occurs and someone is injured or died, it becomes a medico-legal case, wherein the state has a bounden duty to investigate the matter - as to whether it is an accident or accident caused due to previous enmity. If the latter is proven to be the case, the state is to proceed with proper investigation. At the same time, a civil case is also registered against the owner to claim compensation by the legal heirs of the deceased under vicarious liability doctrine.

During the time of trial before a court of law, the prosecution (state) has to prove the charges against the accused and they have to produce witnesses to prove the cause of action. In such a case, naturally, a person who has either seen the accident and/or took him to hospital may be required to come and depose before a court.

As a result of the need to appear before a court, people usually hesitate to go near and/or help an accident victim. As a result, the person who is injured may not receive timely help, which may be essential to saving his/her life.



To overcome this hesitation, and to help provide accident victims with timely assistance, the Hon'ble Supreme court, in *Save Life Foundation vs Union of India*, in their orders in Writ No: 235 of 2012, ordered people to voluntarily provide immediate assistance to people injured in road accidents. It has specifically ordered that such good Samaritans are not liable either in civil or criminal liability. Moreover, such persons must be appreciated by the institutions during their functions, to inspire others to emulate such initiatives, which may likely save a person's life by getting him/her to a medical facility within the golden hour. The State of Tamil Nadu is scrupulously following this and has decided to award Rs. 5,000 for good Samaritans who have saved the lives of road accident victims in a function organised solely for this purpose. ♦

*If you have a question about general legal issues relating to the medical field that you would like more information about, write to us at [info@bloomhealthcare.in](mailto:info@bloomhealthcare.in) - and we will answer it in this column.*



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