

## GUIDELINE

# Obesity and In Vitro Fertilization Procedures

## Purpose

This guideline reflects a recommended course of action to support the provision of safe care in patients with an elevated body mass index (BMI) undergoing in vitro fertilization (IVF) procedures in the non-hospital setting.

Guidelines attempt to define practices that meet the needs of patients in most circumstances and are not a replacement for clinical judgement. As a result, situations may arise in which deviations from these guidelines may be appropriate and physicians may exercise reasonable discretion in their decision-making based on the guidance provided.

## Policy

Those experiencing infertility, choosing to be single parents and 2SLGBTQIA+ are increasingly turning to assisted reproduction technologies (ART) such as IVF to help build their families.<sup>1</sup> Those compromised by cancer and its treatments are also turning to ART for fertility preservation in hope of future pregnancy.<sup>2</sup>

In British Columbia, assisted reproduction technologies (ART) such as IVF are only available in the non-hospital setting (e.g. private facilities). They are not available through the public health system (e.g. hospital).

Careful screening of obese patients prior to a proposed procedure in the non-hospital setting is a key factor to patient safety. However, the BMI limit as outlined in the NHMSFAP's *Obesity* guideline may leave obese patients with no other access to fertility services in BC. This is especially concerning as timely access to fertility services is essential for fertility preservation when facing cancer and for other conditions such as diminished ovarian reserve.<sup>3</sup>

## Guidelines

1. Obese patients must be carefully screened prior to any proposed procedure in the non-hospital setting.
2. If time permits, obese patients should be offered or referred to lifestyle modification strategies to help them lose weight.

3. Consultation with a maternal fetal medicine specialist should be considered for all patients with a BMI > 50.
4. The Canadian Fertility and Andrology Society recommendations on obesity and reproduction should be considered.
5. When considering oocyte retrieval, pelvic ultrasound should be performed prior to commencing ovarian stimulation medications. The ultrasound findings should be documented in the patient's medical record.
6. The conditions outlined in the NHMSFAP's *Obesity* guideline<sup>4</sup> should be followed.
7. For patients with a BMI  $\geq$  40, if considering IV procedural sedation, a pre-procedure anesthesia consultation must be completed before admission for the procedure, not more than 28 days before the procedures and at minimum, one day prior to the procedure.<sup>4</sup>
8. For patients with a BMI  $\geq$  40, an anesthesiologist is required and must be dedicated to the patient at all times throughout the conduct of all procedures performed under IV procedural sedation.<sup>4</sup>
9. The patient's physician must consult with the medical director before proceeding with any proposed procedure on a patient with a BMI equal to or greater than 45.
10. The medical director's decision authorizing the procedure and level of anesthesia on a patient with a BMI equal to or greater than 45 must be documented and filed in the patient's medical record.
11. The consent discussion with the patient must include the associated risks of obesity in relation to the proposed procedure and anesthesia. These risks and any specific additional issues or concerns that arose in the discussion and how there were addressed must be documented.<sup>5</sup>

## References

1. Health Canada [Internet]. Ottawa (ON): Government of Canada; 2023. Assisted human reproduction; 2021 Jan 12 [cited 2023 May 1].
2. Roberts J, Tallon N, Holzer H. Fertility preservation in reproductive age woman facing gonadotoxic treatments [Internet]. Dorval (QC): Canadian Fertility and Andrology Society; 2014 [cited 2023 May 1].
3. Mahutte N, Kamga-Ngande C, Sharma A, Sylvestre C. Obesity and reproduction. *J Obstet Gynaecol Can* [Internet]. 2018 [cited 2023 May 1]; 40(7):950-66.
4. College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia, Non-Hospital Medical and Surgical Facilities Accreditation Program. Guideline: obesity [Internet]. Version 1.1. Vancouver: College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia; 2023 Mar 25 [cited 2023 Mar 1]. 3 p. Document No.: 10834.
5. College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia, Non-Hospital Medical and Surgical Facilities Accreditation Program. Accreditation standards: consent [Internet]. Version 1.2. Vancouver: College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia; 2023 Mar 24 [cited 2023 Mar 1]. 8 p. Document No.: 10796.