



THE Dandelion

THE NEWSLETTER OF FERTILITY NEW ZEALAND, A REGISTERED CHARITY SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH FERTILITY ISSUES

MARCH 2020



Finding a **FIIX**

The IVF and Intra Uterine Insemination trial in couples with unexplained infertility



The FIIX Study is seeking couples with unexplained infertility who have been accepted for publicly funded fertility treatment. If you are on the waitlist currently for IVF and the cause of your infertility is unexplained then you may be eligible to participate.

The researchers want to compare four cycles of IUI with one cycle of IVF in couples with unexplained infertility.

IUI is a fertility treatment where sperm (which has been specially washed and prepared) is placed directly into the uterus at the time of ovulation. Oral medication is given at the start of the period to assist in the production of 1 or 2 eggs that month. The cycle is monitored with blood tests and

sometimes an ultrasound scan.

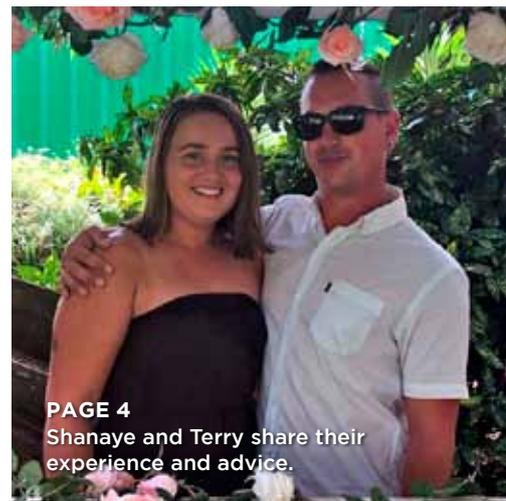
IVF is a fertility treatment where injectable medications are given to stimulate the ovaries to produce multiple eggs. The ovaries response is monitored with blood tests and ultrasound scans. The eggs are collected from the ovaries and fertilised with sperm outside the body. The fertilised egg is grown into an embryo in the laboratory before being transferred into the uterus. Any other embryos suitable are frozen for future use.

If you agree to be involved then you are assigned randomly to receiving either IUI or IVF as your first treatment. You can't pick which

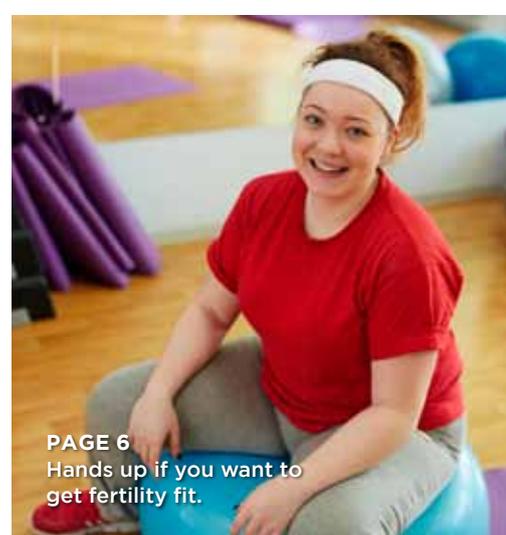
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Welcome Notes

Welcome to *The Dandelion* newsletter.

For many people within our community, the start of a new year is a time for reflection and review, and perhaps resolution to try something new. The response to the pilot programme of 'Jumpstart', NZ's first fertility-specific fitness, wellbeing and weight programme, has been really positive. The Jumpstart programme is outlined on page 6 – it's an exciting venture for us, the YMCA and Pharmaco Ferring.

We were also pleased to start the year with a Webinar on the important topic of how to speak to donation/surrogacy conceived children about their story – with confidence! More on this on page 3.

For the team at Fertility NZ, we start the decade with a significant change in our Board (see page 3) and renewed vigour to serve our

community as best we can. Fertility NZ was incorporated as a national organisation in 1990 (prior to that we existed as regional infertility societies). So in 2020 we reflect on the past 30 years and look forward to the next 30 years. If you haven't read our vision before, it's included below. Wouldn't it be wonderful if our vision was fulfilled and Fertility NZ isn't required in 30 years' time!

Unexplained infertility is a relatively common diagnosis. It does not rule out the possibility of a medical issue; it just means that one has not been found. Auckland University is in the process of launching the FIIX Study, which looks at couples with unexplained infertility. Specifically, it aims to compare four cycles of IUI (intra

uterine insemination) with one cycle of IVF (In Vitro Fertilisation). IUI is lower cost and less invasive than IVF and we are looking forward to reading the study's findings on its effectiveness. Read more about the study, and whether you might be involved.

If you are new to Fertility NZ, please join as a member (free of charge) at www.fertilitynz.org.nz/register and let us help you on your journey, whether it's through information, support or advocacy. We have an army of amazing volunteers around the country who have 'been there' and are ready to support you through the rollercoaster of infertility.

Warm regards,
Juanita Copeland – President

About Fertility New Zealand

Fertility New Zealand is committed to supporting, advocating for and educating all people who face fertility challenges.

Fertility NZ was founded in 1990 and is a registered charity. It operates on a national level and much of its work is undertaken by dedicated volunteers. Fertility NZ provides assistance for people with fertility issues through the following channels:

- **Support** A network of regular support gatherings, workshops and contact groups throughout the country; an 0800 line and email address for enquiries, and infertility forums on our website where members can provide support to one another.

- **Information** Fertility NZ's website www.fertilitynz.org.nz is the focal point of information; informative fact sheet brochures are available for members and through clinics; regular publication of *The Dandelion* newsletter and email updates to members; conferences and information events. An annual campaign to raise awareness of infertility and fertility issues.

- **Advocacy** Representing the voice of people affected by infertility on medical, ethical and policy issues.

Our vision

Fertility NZ has a vision of a 'fertility friendly' and fertility-aware New Zealand where:

- Infertility is recognised, understood and supported;
- All men and women faced with the medical condition of infertility have access to appropriate, timely and fully-funded medical treatment;
- Men and women have all the information necessary to enable them to make informed decisions regarding their fertility;
- Young New Zealanders learn about fertility preservation;
- Fertility and all alternative forms of whānau-building are respected and valued.

Fertility NZ's Board

Our AGM in November saw a change in Board members. Juanita Copeland, President, thanked our departing members and welcomed the skills and fresh perspectives our new members bring. Our Board members are based around the country and are all dedicated to helping New Zealanders on a journey to create whānau. Each member brings skills and knowledge from their professional lives which will enhance the organisation, and they have also had lived experience of infertility. Visit our website for Board member bios and to learn more about what each person brings to the Board table. Fertility NZ's 2019-20 Board is:

Juanita Copeland – *President*
 Brad Edley – *Treasurer*
 Jo Catty – *Secretary*
 Catherine Somerville-Frost
 Jo Barnett
 Kim Wiseman
 Madeleine Setchell
 Stuti Misra

Board Advisors:

Mel Olds (Wellington)
 Michelle MacKinven (Auckland)
 Fiona McDonald (Fertility Plus)
 Lana Hawkey (Repromed)
 Michelle Parris-Larkin (Fertility Associates)

DONOR CONCEPTION & SURROGACY NETWORK

Late last year, we launched a network for people interested in, on a path to, or parents of children born with the help of donors and surrogates. The group is growing rapidly with sharing of ideas, tips and experiences, across many different whānau forms.

In November, the Network hosted a Webinar on 'The Legal Aspects of Donation & Surrogacy'. Stewart Dalley, Solicitor with Ryken and Associates, gave an overview of this area in a New Zealand context, followed by a Q&A session. This is an area which often seems overwhelming, so we were delighted to receive feedback on how helpful the session was.

A key concern of both parents and prospective parents of children born with the help of donors and surrogates was addressed in a second Webinar held during February. Associate Professor Ken Daniels and Counsellor Fiona McDonald discussed the area of communication and disclosure during 'Communicating my



Fiona McDonald

child's donation/surrogacy story confidently'.

Recordings of both webinars are available through the Donor Conception & Surrogacy Network. To join, search Facebook Groups for 'Donor Conception and Surrogacy Network NZ'. Screening questions apply, and your identity is only visible to other group members. The eight Admins, all with different journeys themselves, look forward to welcoming you!

Finding a FIIX

◀ From page 1

treatment you would like. If you are assigned to the IUI group you will receive four cycles of IUI followed by two cycles of IVF until a live birth is achieved or you have completed all treatment. If you are assigned to the IVF group you will receive two cycles of IVF until a live birth is

achieved or you have completed all treatment.

If you agree to participate in the study your treatment will most likely start 3-6 months earlier than if you remain on the public waitlist, and all your treatment is paid for.

The study is currently available for

couples receiving care from Fertility Associates in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington and Christchurch as well as couples from Repromed in Auckland and Fertility Plus in Auckland. The researchers are aiming to recruit 580 couples over the next three years.

If you would like further information or to enquire about whether you may be eligible please contact: theFIIXstudy@auckland.ac.nz or phone 021 0249 7362.



Shanaye and Terry attend a family wedding in Auckland, early 2019.

Waiting on our miracle...

Shanaye and Terry describe their experiences so far on their quest for a family.

This is our journey so far: I have always had some sort of issue since my periods began. I had problems getting anyone to help me at the doctors so gave up trying. My husband Terry and I began trying to conceive not long after we married (nearly five years ago). I went to the

doctor after eight months of trying with no success, but again found no answers.

After about two and a half years of still trying we saw a new doctor who referred us to our local fertility clinic immediately and thankfully were seen within a couple months (February

“I was not prepared for the emotional roller coaster I would face this time. The surgery itself was a success but there were a lot of challenges, one being the realisation that without IVF we would never be able to conceive on our own.”

2018). We were given answers straight away and I was told both of my fallopian tubes were blocked and the best chance of having successful IVF was to have them both removed.

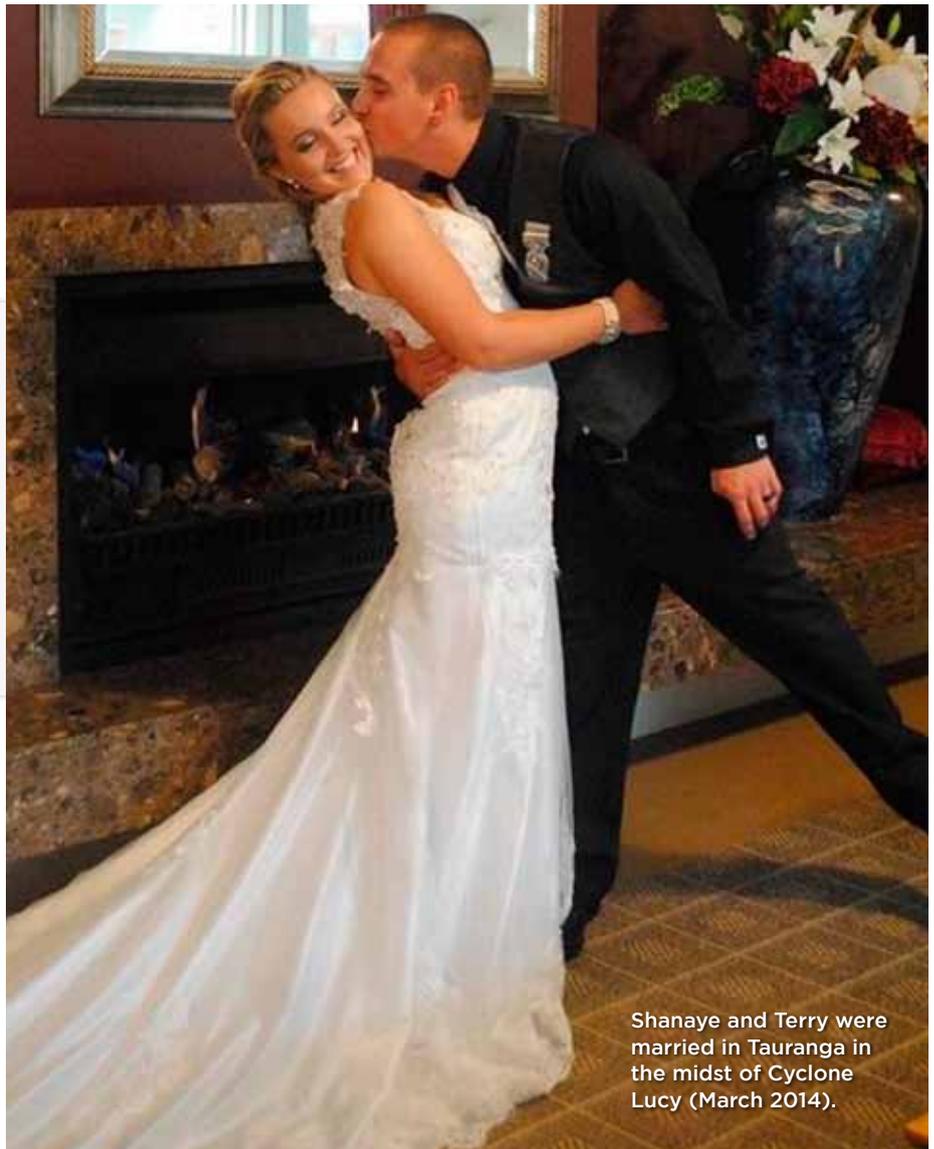
The surgery happened in November 2018. I have had operations before but I was not prepared for the emotional roller coaster I would face this time. The surgery itself was a success but there were a lot of challenges, one being the realisation that without IVF we would never be able to conceive on our own. I also struggled with people around me not entirely understanding the pain and emotions I was feeling.

After the surgery I felt a lot of regret, although I knew my fallopian tubes were damaged and not functioning, it was a horrible feeling of loss that took a lot to get over.

In May 2019 we began our first round of IVF. I was surprised at how easy injecting myself every night for a couple of weeks was. It quickly became our bed-time ritual and was rather easy. I kept telling myself “this is the easy bit” and it was.

Ready for it

I spent a few weeks being poked and prodded, having blood tests,



Shanaye and Terry were married in Tauranga in the midst of Cyclone Lucy (March 2014).

“We have lost a few once-close friends because they chose not to understand and ignored our journey, but we have also gained a lot of great new friendships.”

ultrasounds and multiple drives to Hamilton. When it finally came to the egg collection I was ready for it. I’m going to be honest – I was so gutted that after all of that effort we only got six eggs. I’m 27 and healthy, and I knew others who were machines and

would get at least a dozen. They say it only takes one but it also takes the right one at the right time... it’s a lot of science and quite a bit of luck.

A week passed and we drove to Hamilton for our transfer, not knowing how many or if any embryos survived. Thankfully four had survived. One was transferred and the remaining three were frozen.

The so-called “two week wait” actually went pretty fast and shortly we found out we were expecting.

Sadly, at six short weeks we miscarried. We aren’t entirely sure what happened and are heart broken. That was the hardest, most horrible thing we have had to face.

“This is a journey like no other and talking about it is so important. You need to be 100 percent honest with how you’re feeling and talk to someone, always talk and don’t keep it inside.”

◀ Losses and gains

We have lost a few once-close friends because they chose not to understand and ignored our journey, but we have also gained a lot of great new friendships.

I have been very open about our journey, sharing all the steps and am so thankful that out of a challenging time there were amazing people cheering us on and talking about the challenges they are also facing.

We have done only one round of IVF and it was a real challenge. We are currently taking a break before we try a frozen transfer. This journey has taught me that it is so important to look after yourself and your mental health. During this journey you need to make sure you come first.

Share your feelings

This is a journey like no other and talking about it is so important. Even if you only have one person you can talk to (not including your partner if you have one) you need to be 100 percent honest with how you’re feeling and talk to someone, always talk and don’t keep it inside.

And make sure you do things for yourself – take some time off work and have a massage, walk, get your hair done, just get out and do something not fertility related.



Jumpstart your fertility!

Do you want to optimise your fertility by improving your fitness, lifestyle or weight?

Jumpstart is a 10-week programme tailored specifically for people who are wanting to conceive a child. It’s a positive, goal-focused programme enabling participants to ‘jumpstart’ their fertility and lifestyle.

Fertility New Zealand has spent the last year developing the fertility-specific programme alongside YMCA and Pharmaco Ferring. It is fully customised to each participant and includes guidance for conditions such as Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome and Male Factor infertility.

www.jumpstartprogramme.co.nz/fertility

A pilot programme begins in March, at 12 YMCA centres across Auckland and Hamilton. You can bring your partner, whānau member or support person on this journey with you!

Included in the programme is a ‘Nutrition & Fertility’ session presented by leading fertility dietitian Alice Gormack, on the evening of 1st April.

The total cost is \$80 for the full 10 weeks, but hurry as spaces are filling fast and the Pilot programme must be started during before 31 March!



Thanks Augustine, you made our day!

We were over the moon when New Zealand-owned boutique clothing brand, Augustine, called to invite us to their Charity Store. They told us that they wanted to bring a smile to the faces of some ladies in our community and lighten their lives for a day, or beyond, with their new garments.

Twenty women who really needed a lift enjoyed an afternoon of free-of-charge shopping and each left with a bag of beautiful Augustine garments and shoes. Included in the group were a few of our tireless volunteers, on their own fertility journeys, whom we really wanted to thank! The Charity Store was buzzing with excitement over the gorgeous clothing and the joy of this decadent time of self-care.

To Kelly and Nathan Coe and the rest of the Augustine team, thank you so much for the invitation and your compassion for the rigours of infertility. You shone some much-needed light into these women's lives.



PUBLIC CEREMONY *Seeds of Hope*

**Saturday, 16 May 2020,
2.00pm - 3.30pm**

**Auckland, Wellington and
Christchurch**

We are holding a Ceremony to acknowledge the losses connected with infertility - childlessness, miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, acknowledging embryo loss, secondary infertility, and loss of dreams ...

Designed and created by two celebrants who have been on an infertility journey of their own, to assist in the healing process and to provide hope.

- Anglican Church of St Columba & Community Centre, 92 Surrey Crescent, Grey Lynn, Auckland
- Johnsonville Uniting Church, 18 Dr Taylor Terrace, Johnsonville
- Christchurch venue to be confirmed - please register your interest

These events are free of charge. Light refreshments served.

For more information please contact

Keeley Jenkins

Auckland
keeley@kcelebrant.co.nz

Winnie Duggan

Wellington
winnie@lifecelebrant.co.nz

Colleen Heward-Carmont

Christchurch
colleencelebrant@icloud.com

noticeboard

Support
Group
Dates

AUCKLAND

CASUAL COFFEE GROUP

Group meets monthly on Wednesdays.

18 March; 1 April; 6 May; 10 June; 15 July

FERTILITY SUPPORT SERIES

Semi-structured course, ideal for couples – spaces are limited. 10, 17, 24 March (attend all 3 sessions) 9, 16, 23 June (attend all 3 sessions)

PREGNANT AFTER FERTILITY TREATMENT

Group meets monthly on Sundays. 1 March; 5 April; 3 May; 7 June; 5 July

SECONDARY INFERTILITY

Monthly meetings, please email for details: secondariesupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

SINGLE MOTHERS BY CHOICE

Monthly meetings for those considering/planning single motherhood. Please email for details: singlewomensupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

HAMILTON

Group meets every third Saturday at 10.00am.

21 March; 18 April; 16 May; 20 June; 18 July

TAURANGA

Group meets every two months on a Saturday at 10.30am. 28 March; 30 May; 25 July

WELLINGTON

'Support and Connect' group meets every six weeks on a Wednesday. 25 March; 6 May; 17 June; 29 July

CHRISTCHURCH

Group meets on the last Tuesday of every month 6.00–8.00pm. 24 March; 28 April; 26 May; 23 June; 28 July
Please note new venue: Raraka Riccarton Centre, 199 Clarence St (meeting room 4)

DUNEDIN

Group meets every six weeks on a Wednesday at 7.30–8.30pm. 25 March; 6 May; 17 July

INVERCARGILL

Group meets on the fourth Wednesday of every month. 25 March; 22 April; 27 May; 24 June; 22 July

Support information

How can we help you?



Fertility NZ support contacts

Auckland

aucklandsupport@fertilitynz.org.nz
(Fertility Support Series, Casual Coffee, Pregnant After Fertility Treatment)

secondariesupport@fertilitynz.org.nz
(Secondary Infertility)
singlewomensupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Hamilton

hamiltonsupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Tauranga

taurangasupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Hawke's Bay

hawkesbaysupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Taranaki

taranakisupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Wellington

wellingtonsupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

West Coast

westcoastsupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Christchurch

christchurchsupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Central Otago

centralotagosupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Dunedin

dunedinsupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Invercargill

invercargillsupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Christchurch – our team is here for you

We constantly hear people say they wish they'd joined our groups earlier, and that it was refreshing and reassuring to meet others facing similar challenges. In Christchurch our wonderful volunteers, Charlotte and Laura, organise and facilitate monthly catchups. These are no-obligation gatherings which sometimes have guest speakers. If you're thinking about joining, email Charlotte on christchurchsupport@fertilitynz.org.nz or join their closed Facebook group on FNZ Chch Fertility Support Group. We look forward to meeting you!

This material is supported by way of an educational grant from Bayer New Zealand Limited. The information submitted is intended to assist health care professionals and patients in forming their own conclusions and making decisions, but may not represent a comprehensive listing of all available information on the subject. The views and opinions expressed by the individual presenters do not necessarily represent the opinion of Bayer New Zealand Limited.

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