



## PATIENT'S FACT SHEET: **THE CLOMIPHENE CHALLENGE TEST**

The clomiphene challenge test (CCT) is designed to help assess ovarian reserve. It involves measuring how the ovaries respond to being stimulated by clomiphene. In general, we consider doing this test for women who may be likely to have decreased ovarian function (older age group, history of removal of an ovary or other ovarian surgery, etc.).

Clomid® and Serophene® are two brand names; the generic name for the medication is clomiphene. It is only manufactured in 50mg tablets. Clomiphene is an anti-estrogen and binds up estrogen receptors in the pituitary gland, thereby fooling it into thinking that blood estrogen levels are low. In response, the pituitary gland increases its output of follicle stimulating hormone (FSH), which is designed to push the ovaries to work harder and increase estrogen production. Estrogen is produced by the developing egg follicles. By measuring how the ovaries respond to the FSH stimulation, and how much FSH is needed to produce a response, we can get an idea of ovarian reserve.

### **How is the test done?**

Count the first full day of menstrual flow as day 1 of your cycle. On day 3, blood should be drawn for FSH and estrogen levels. We will either fax an order to the lab, or give you a written lab slip for this. The lab drawing station in our office building is open Monday-Friday 7:30-5:30, and the lab at the hospital across the street is open 7 days a week.

Take clomiphene 100mg (two tablets) daily for 5 days starting on day 5 of cycle (days 5-9). It doesn't matter whether you take them at the same time or not.

On day 10, blood should again be drawn for FSH and estrogen levels. We will discuss the results with you in person if you have an upcoming consultation appointment. If you don't have an appointment set up, we will call you in a few days.

### **How are the results interpreted?**

High FSH levels may indicate ovaries with diminished function—they need greater than average amounts of stimulation to work.

Low estrogen levels after taking clomiphene may also indicate diminished ovarian reserve.

Normal, or "good" results would include low FSH/low estrogen levels prior to taking clomiphene, and low FSH/high estrogen levels after taking the medication, indicating that only a small amount of FSH is needed to tell the ovaries to make large amounts of estrogen.

### **Side effects, etc.**

Some people experience transient hot flashes or blurred vision while taking clomiphene.

A good response to clomiphene frequently results in efficient ovulation around day 14 or 15 of the menstrual cycle. Take advantage of this by trying to have intercourse around this time—you may find that the test is therapeutic!