

Information Sheet: FAQ – Supervision

The following questions are common questions about Halachic fertility supervision.

Question: *What is Halachic fertility supervision?*

Answer: For all fertility treatments that involve laboratory use of genetic material (sperm, ova, embryos) a halachic supervisor familiar with the process and the halacha must be present.

All aspects of the lab work are overseen including sample washing, centrifugation, freezing, and loading of pipettes. When samples need to be incubated or stored they are locked either in dedicated incubators and storage tanks or in a closed and locked section of a larger unit. An embossed seal is also affixed to ensure that no possible mistake can be made.

Question: *Why do we need this supervision? Is it a Halachic requirement?*

Answer: This supervision is necessary because establishing yichus (parentage) is so important. Due to fear of human error the majority of Orthodox rabbis have ruled that Jewish law requires an outside supervisor present to monitor the procedure and storage of the genetic material.

Question: *Are the precautionary measures taken by the labs themselves sufficient?*

Answer: While we have full confidence in the doctors and embryologists, in order to establish halachic parentage (yichus) we need *yediah*, certain knowledge of the exact source of the baby.

To create this knowledge an outside person has the dedicated job of verifying the "identity" of the samples used. Even if the lab workers are *frum* and G-d fearing, it is not sufficient. Rav Sholom Elyashiv, shlit"a, himself told us "even if I were to be the lab worker I could not act as a valid witness for this matter".

Question: *Why can't my husband act as the supervisor?*

Answer: In order to supervise one needs to know what to look for and where errors are likely to happen. An untrained person can not be a valid witness to the process.

To date more than 150 supervisors have been trained by the Puah Institute and are available any time and any place to serve the couples.

תהילים קכו:ה "הורעים בדמעה ברינה יקצרו"
"Those who sow with tears shall reap with joy" Psalms 126:5

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Question: *Are there any cases of mistakes that were prevented by the supervisors?*

Answer: To date dozens of errors have been prevented by the Puah supervisors. In each case, the near-error is analyzed to improve the supervisory method for the future.

Question: *After oocyte retrieval am I considered a niddah? Can IUI be done on Shabbat? Is TESA a halachic problem?*

Answer: In the eyes of our community and in the eyes of halacha every couple is special and unique. For any specific questions please consult with your rabbi or one of the Puah rabbinic counselors as the halacha may be different in each case.

Question: *What suddenly happened now that we need supervision? What did couples do before Puah?*

Answer: Ever since IVF treatment became available, supervision has been required. Before the creation of Puah's supervision services, many poskim prohibited IVF treatment altogether. Today, the solution of halachic supervision for fertility treatments has been in place for 18 years and is required by all major poskim.

Question: *Do all rabbinic authorities accept Puah's supervision?*

Answer: Yes. The Puah Institute renowned for its cooperation with all rabbis and poskim from the entire rabbinic spectrum

Question: *Who are your supervisors?*

Answer: Puah's supervisors are religious women in your community who give of their time to help couples with this important mitzvah.

Question: *Is our confidentiality assured?*

Answer: Definitely. Each of Puah's supervisors are carefully screened before and during the training process. The supervisors all understand the sensitive nature of their job, are extremely discreet, and each sign a very explicit confidentiality agreement.

Question: *How much does supervision cost?*

Answer: Every effort is made to minimize the cost of the supervision services. The cost will vary according to the type and location of the procedure. For details please contact the Puah office in your area.

Question: *How do I request supervision?*

Answer: Once you have set an appointment with your fertility clinic or doctor's office, call your local Puah office. Please have the following details at hand: your personal information, date and location of your appointment, the type of procedure, and the name of your rabbinic authority.