

## Facts about Ovarian Hyperstimulation Syndrome (OHSS)

The medications used to stimulate your ovaries may cause side effects. These side effects can range from mild to severe. Excessive stimulation of the ovaries is called ovarian hyperstimulation. This may require a hospital stay. Be aware of body changes and ask your program nurse if you have questions or concerns. She will contact the physician if necessary. You may have symptoms of mild hyperstimulation during your treatment cycle; however, moderate and severe symptoms usually occur 6-8 days after treatment ends.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS	WHY HAPPENS	WHAT TO DO
<p>MILD:</p> <p>You may experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• abdominal bloating and feeling of fullness</li> <li>• nausea</li> <li>• diarrhea</li> <li>• slight weight gain</li> </ul>	<p>This may be due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ovaries are larger than normal, tender and fragile</li> <li>• high levels of estrogen (E2) in bloodstream may upset your digestive system and fluid balance causing bloating</li> </ul>	<p>Recommended Treatment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• avoid sexual intercourse</li> <li>• do not have a vaginal (pelvic) exam other than by a program physician</li> <li>• rest, no heavy lifting or straining</li> <li>• Gentle exercise only ie. Walk or do range of motion exercises for 5 min. every waking hour</li> <li>• drink 1-2 litres clear fluids per day.</li> <li>• if unable to drink at least 1 litre in 24 or urinary output ↓'s or becomes concentrated, call program nurse</li> <li>• May take Tylenol plain or extra strength 1-2 tablets every 4-6 hours for pain</li> </ul>

<p>MODERATE:</p> <p>You may also experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• weight gain of greater than 2 lbs. per day (excessive weight gain)</li> <li>• increased abdominal measurement causing clothes to feel tight &gt;2 inches per day</li> <li>• vomiting and diarrhea</li> <li>• urine is darker, and amount is less</li> <li>• skin/hair may feel dry</li> <li>• thirst</li> <li>• pain and cramping</li> </ul>	<p>This may be due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• high levels of hormones in bloodstream upset the digestive system</li> <li>• fluid imbalance causes dehydration because body fluid collects in the abdomen and other tissues</li> <li>• this fluid collection causes severe bloating</li> </ul>	<p>As above plus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• call the program nurse or, after hours, the gynecologist on call at the University campus</li> <li>• you may need to be seen by a physician who will do an ultrasound</li> <li>• do daily weights in the morning</li> <li>• measure around your abdomen while lying flat (just below the belly button) before getting out of bed</li> <li>• you may need blood tests</li> <li>• record intake and output (see reverse)</li> </ul>
<p>SEVERE:</p> <p>In addition you may experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fullness/ bloating up above the belly button</li> <li>• shortness of breath</li> <li>• urination has reduced or stopped and become darker</li> <li>• calf pains and chest pains</li> <li>• marked abdominal bloating or distention</li> <li>• Lower abdominal pain</li> </ul>	<p>This may be due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• extremely large ovaries</li> <li>• fluid collects in chest cavity and/or abdominal cavity, as well as in tissues</li> <li>• the risk of abnormal blood clotting increases now</li> </ul>	<p>As above plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• call the program nurse, or after hours, the gynecologist on call at the University campus as soon as possible</li> <li>• you may need to be assessed at the hospital</li> <li>• hospitalization may be necessary to remove excess fluid</li> </ul>



If your period starts, you will likely begin to feel better. Pregnancy may prolong or exaggerate these side effects. It may take up to 10 days for the symptoms to resolve.

**Remember:** the fact sheet is only a guide and not intended as a substitute for medical care.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

For high risk patients it may be advisable not to transfer embryos in a cycle. Due to the concern for the patient to become quite ill, it may be necessary to avoid a pregnancy at this time. All embryos would be frozen and transferred in another cycle. Physicians assess the situation individually with the couple before an embryo transfer is scheduled.



