



Caution: Federal law restricts this device to sale by or on the order of a physician or a practitioner trained and certified in its use. Assisted Hatching is not recommended for routine use in all IVF patients.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT LASER-ASSISTED HATCHING

Q: What is assisted hatching?

A: In order for an embryo to implant in the uterine lining, the inner embryo (blastocyst) must “hatch” from its protective outer shell (the zona pellucida). Assisted hatching is a technique in which the zona pellucida of an embryo is purposely weakened or cut to help the embryo hatch more easily and promote implantation.

Q: What are the different ways of performing assisted hatching?

A: There are three methods of assisted hatching: mechanical, chemical, and laser-assisted. With mechanical methods, an incision or hole is made in the zona pellucida using a tool such as a microsurgical knife or a special glass needle. The chemical method directs a stream of acidic hatching solution against outer shell to digest a portion of the zona pellucida. Laser-assisted hatching (LAH) uses a highly focused laser beam to remove the zona pellucida in very precise increments.

Q: Who should have assisted hatching of their embryos?

A: The most commonly used indications for use of assisted hatching are:

- ✓ Age: Women over 37 years old
- ✓ Hormonal Status: Women with an elevated baseline level of FSH (follicular stimulating hormone)
- ✓ Embryo Quality: Women with poor prognosis embryos, including conditions such as a thick zona pellucida, slow cell division rate, or high cell fragmentation
- ✓ IVF Attempts: Women who have failed 1 or more IVF cycles
- ✓ Frozen Embryos: Women using frozen/thawed embryos, which may have hardened zona pellucida

Q: What are the risks of assisted hatching using the laser?

A: The risks of assisting hatching using the laser are similar to the risks when using chemical or mechanical methods. These risks include possible damage / destruction to the embryo and a possible increased chance of monozygotic (identical) twinning.

Q: What are the benefits of assisted hatching using the laser?

A: Laser-assisted hatching may require less embryo handling than other assisted hatching methods. Also, laser-assisted hatching may be faster than other methods and therefore the embryo may spend less time outside of the incubator.

Q: What do we know about the health of babies born following laser-assisted hatching?

A: In recent follow-up studies of babies born after laser-assisted hatching, no increase in major or minor congenital abnormalities and no observable changes in the cells’ genetic material were noted.