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## Reducing The Risk of Ectopic Pregnancy During IVF

Ectopic pregnancy is scary, and even the possibility of experiencing one during IVF can feel overwhelming to women undergoing treatment. [Dr. John Zhang](#) (New Hope Fertility, New York) explains that there are ways to minimize risks of ectopic pregnancies during IVF cycles.

An ectopic pregnancy takes place when a fertilized egg implants somewhere other than inside the uterine cavity, typically within one of the fallopian tubes, but can also occur in an ovary, the cervix, or on the outside of the uterus. Ectopic pregnancies that progress far enough can be life-threatening to the mother because they cause internal bleeding that can lead to hemorrhage. Ectopic pregnancies that occur during an IVF cycle are almost always caught very early due to the constant monitoring and can be addressed by injections of methotrexate. Ectopics that progress farther may require surgical removal.



Dr. Zhang explains that there is greater risk for ectopic pregnancies in fresh cycles: “In conventional [IVF fresh cycles](#), when you have much higher levels of estrogen hormones, this can sometimes work to pull the egg from the uterine cavity. Ectopic pregnancy rates in fresh cycles are as high as 3-5%, with a lower risk occurring from a day 5 embryo transfer since there is less time to float around and get in the tubes.”

[Frozen embryo transfers](#), on the other hand, present less risk for ectopic pregnancies because they often require less stimulation and medication. “Frozen embryo transfers have an ectopic rate of almost zero because in an FET, the estrogen levels are much lower than in fresh cycles,” Dr. Zhang says.

To determine your risk for ectopic pregnancy, your doctor will also examine your medical history, as a history of ectopic pregnancies will increase future risk. Other risk factors include pelvic inflammation, infection or disease as well as anatomical issues with fallopian tubes that are not shaped normally or that were damaged during previous surgical procedures.