

BOURNLIFE

Part of MEDICLINIC

Volume 1

WHEN HOPE BLOOMED INTO THREE

HOW ONE MOTHER'S FAITH
TURNED INTO THREE TINY
HEARTBEATS

Bourn Hall
FERTILITY CLINIC

**MAKE ROOM
FOR LIGHT
AND HOPE.**

**BOURN HALL CLINIC
WHERE HOPE BLOOMS.**



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HEIN VAN ECK

Chief Executive Officer,
Mediclinic Middle East

MESSAGE

FROM THE CEO

**Dear Readers, Partners,
and Community,**

At Mediclinic Middle East, our purpose has always been clear: to enhance the quality of life through clinically advanced, world-class healthcare and our brand philosophy, the Science of Care. In every hospital, clinic, and specialised service across our network, this purpose guides how we think, how we act, and how we care, ensuring patients experience the same trusted standard wherever they are on their journey.

Healthcare continues to evolve at a remarkable speed. Advances in science, digital capability, and personalised medicine are reshaping how we diagnose, treat, and support patients. Yet one truth remains unchanged: people place their trust in us at some of the most vulnerable moments of their lives. That trust is a privilege and a responsibility we carry with sincerity, precision, and compassion, values that sit at the heart of our Expertise You Can Trust promise.

Bourn Hall Fertility Clinic reflects this commitment in a profound and historic way. Bourn Hall's story began with the birth of the world's first IVF baby in 1978, a milestone that reshaped modern medicine and gave hope to millions. That pioneering spirit, which started in England,

continues today in the United Arab Emirates, strengthened by its partnership with Mediclinic's regional and global network. Together, we bring expertise, precision, and a shared vision to make every patient's journey toward parenthood one of hope, trust, and joy, supported at every step by a seamless continuum of care.

Bourn Hall's legacy of innovation is supported by Mediclinic's comprehensive continuum of care, advanced diagnostics, and multidisciplinary expertise. Across our facilities, specialists in reproductive medicine, women's and men's health, endocrinology, genetics, and oncology work closely to provide holistic, precision-based fertility care for optimal outcomes. Whether in the consultation room, the laboratory, or the operating theatre, we are united by one purpose: helping families achieve their dreams of parenthood through individualised, evidence-based care delivered with empathy and deep respect for the emotional complexity of IVF journeys.

Every fertility journey is unique. For some, it is a story of resilience. For others, it is a story of hope revived after years of uncertainty. What we strive to offer is a place where science is uncompromising, compassion is constant, and every individual feels seen, supported, and safe, ensuring

patient experience remains as strong as our clinical outcomes. Across the Middle East, Mediclinic continues to strengthen this philosophy. From world-class maternity and neonatal care to oncology, cardiovascular services, digital health, primary care, and prevention, our focus remains unwavering: delivering care grounded in evidence, delivered with heart, and designed to meaningfully improve life, supported by the integrated pathways that enable patients to move confidently and seamlessly across our network.

We do this through:

- Clinical excellence supported by international partnerships
- Robust quality governance that ensures safety and consistency
- Innovation and research that bring global best practice to the UAE
- Expert teams who embody compassion and integrity every day
- A seamless continuum of care that supports families long before and long after a successful pregnancy, reinforced by our Expertise You Can Trust positioning

To every reader, regulator, partner, clinician, and family, thank you for the trust you continue to place in us. It inspires us to strive higher, innovate boldly, and remain true to our mission.

MESSAGE

FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dr. WEAM AWWAD

Director, Continuum
of Care Business
Mediclinic Middle East

Celebrating Courage and Hope

In every fertility journey, there is science and then there is something deeper: the resilience to keep going, the courage to hope again, and the vulnerability of opening your heart to the unknown.

At Mediclinic's Bourn Hall Fertility Clinic, we see these stories unfold every day. Our role is more than clinical; it's deeply personal. Because fertility care isn't only about outcomes, it's about experience, dignity, and the emotional wellbeing of every individual and couple who walks through our doors.

BournLife magazine is a tribute to that experience. It captures the unseen moments: the quiet strength, the shared tears, the unwavering support from our teams, the internal battles and the small victories that often go unnoticed. Alongside these deeply human experiences, our

outcomes remain among the strongest in the region, reflecting the clinical excellence behind the care we provide. The stories in this magazine bring those results to life by highlighting the journeys behind them.

Through these pages, we honour the emotional journey behind every clinical milestone. We aim to bring visibility to the human side of fertility care and to offer a space where patients feel represented, understood, and uplifted.

We are proud to be part of a healthcare ecosystem that doesn't treat people in isolation, but instead walks beside them with empathy, precision, and continuity and accompanies them on their journeys.

To everyone navigating fertility: your strength inspires us. May this magazine offer you comfort, insight, and the quiet reminder that you are never alone.

EDITOR'S Note

WHEN HOPE BLOOMED

Every story inside BournLife begins with hope; the quiet, steady kind that lives in the hearts of those who say no to giving up, and choose to push forward with brevity and hope. This hope moves people to take that first difficult step of walking through the doors of Bourn Hall, and believing that life can begin, again. The cover story of our debut issue features a couple blessed with triplets through IVF, which captures that spirit of BournLife perfectly. What began as a long and uncertain journey that lasted 7 years, with multiple miscarriages, became a story of faith, resilience, and joy multiplied by three. It's a reminder that every challenge can give way to something extraordinary.

This issue of BournLife celebrates beginnings in all their forms, scientific, emotional, and deeply human. You'll meet people whose journeys have inspired us, learn from the experts who dedicate their lives to creating life, and explore the many ways wellness, balance, and compassion shape the path to parenthood. As you turn each page, we hope you feel the same warmth, grace, and possibility that define Bourn Hall. Welcome to Bourn Life, where hope blooms and life begins, again.

— Esther Kimuyu

About
BOURN HALL


ABOUT BOURN HALL

Bourn Hall, the Home with Hope

WHERE
SCIENCE MEETS
COMPASSION,
AND LIFE BEGINS



Please scan the qr code to
learn more about our story



FROM THE BIRTHPLACE
OF THE FIRST IVF BABY
TO THE UAE, BOURN HALL
CONTINUES A LEGACY
BUILT ON SCIENCE,
COMPASSION, AND HOPE,
HELPING FAMILIES BEGIN
THEIR JOURNEY TO LIFE,
ONE STORY AT A TIME.



“WHERE DO BABIES COME FROM?”

This is a question every parent has heard, but at Bourn Hall, it carries a deeper meaning, one rooted in discovery, hope, and love. More than four decades ago, what began as a dream in a small English village reshaped the very fabric of modern medicine. The birth of the world’s first IVF baby in 1978 not only answered one of life’s most profound

questions, it opened the door to millions of families who had once believed parenthood was beyond their reach.

A LEGACY THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

Founded by the pioneering team of Professor Robert Edwards and Dr Patrick Steptoe, Bourn Hall became the world’s first IVF clinic, a place where science met compassion, and miracles took shape

under the microscope. For their groundbreaking work, Professor Edwards was awarded the Nobel Prize, a recognition that underscored not only scientific brilliance but humanity’s collective leap forward in understanding life itself. That same legacy lives on at Bourn Hall UAE, where the spirit of innovation continues to thrive. Each clinic, in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Al Ain, carries forward the founders’ vision: to offer world-class fertility care rooted in empathy, expertise, and ethical practice.



MORE THAN **A FERTILITY CLINIC**



Today, Bourn Hall is more than a name, it's a home of hope. Every treatment, every consultation, and every moment of care is guided by the belief that life begins with love, and sometimes, love needs a little help.



Behind every successful cycle is a team of infertility medicine specialists, embryologists, and nurses who understand that fertility care is not just about science. It's about people, their dreams, their fears, and their quiet strength in moments of uncertainty. From advanced IVF and egg freezing to genetic testing and counselling, every service is designed with the patient's journey in mind.

AboutBOURN HALL

PART OF THE MEDICLINIC FAMILY

**“LIFE BEGINS
WITH LOVE; AND
SOMETIMES,
LOVE NEEDS A
LITTLE HELP.”**

As part of Mediclinic Middle East, Bourn Hall UAE stands within a trusted healthcare network, ensuring seamless, integrated support for patients at every stage of their fertility journey.

It is where cutting-edge medical expertise meets heartfelt understanding, a rare blend that has helped thousands across the region and beyond experience the joy of new beginnings.



**“FROM
ENGLAND TO
THE EMIRATES,
THE LEGACY OF
IVF CONTINUES
TO CHANGE
LIVES.”**

A FUTURE BUILT ON LOVE, SCIENCE, AND HOPE

In every consultation room, every laboratory, and every hopeful smile, the spirit of Bourn Hall endures.

The story that began in England decades ago continues to unfold here in the UAE, where families are formed, dreams are realised, and hope truly blooms.

Because at **Bourn Hall**, we don't just ask where babies come from. **We help bring them into the world.**



“BOURN HALL IS MORE THAN A CLINIC.
IT'S A HOME OF HOPE.”





FROM LAB TO LIFE
THE JOURNEY OF
Dr. GHADA HUSSEIN

For Dr Ghada Hussein, Consultant in Reproductive Medicine and Infertility, and Medical Director of Bourn Hall Abu Dhabi, the journey into fertility medicine was never just a career, it was a calling. From Baghdad to Jordan to Sweden, and finally United Arab Emirates, her story is one of scientific pursuit, and an unwavering belief in the miracle of life.

When Dr Ghada first arrived in Sweden, she carried more than just her qualifications, she carried her dreams.

“From the first week I arrived, I started knocking on doors,” she recalls, smiling. “I was determined to continue in the field I loved.”

Her passion for reproductive medicine began early while pursuing her doctorate in reproductive physiology. Her PhD thesis, which focused on exploring the impact of sperm freezing and thawing on IVF outcomes, ignited a lifelong fascination with fertility and the delicate process of conception.

“That’s when I truly fell in love with the science of life,” she says.

Her research took shape in Jordan and was defended at the University of Baghdad’s College of Medicine, both places that grounded her deeply in the realities of fertility care. Before she officially became an obstetrician and gynaecologist, Dr Ghada was already deeply immersed in IVF science, while she was

working as the head of the embryology lab in Jordan for five years. Her move to Sweden marked a turning point. Though well-qualified, she chose humility over comfort, starting over to gain her Swedish medical board certification and later joining Sahlgrenska University Hospital in Gothenburg, where she completed a three-year fellowship in reproductive medicine. “I entered IVF from the opposite direction,” she laughs. “I started in the lab and then moved to the clinic, so I understand both sides of the journey.”


This unique dual perspective allows Dr Ghada to bridge the worlds of science and patient care, from understanding the earliest cellular beginnings of life to guiding couples through the emotional and medical complexities of treatment. Today, as the Medical Director of Bourn Hall Abu Dhabi, she continues to bring empathy, expertise, and innovation to every patient’s story. Her journey, from lab benches to leadership, reflects the spirit of BournLife: where science, compassion, and hope bloom together.

**“I ENTERED
IVF FROM THE
OPPOSITE
DIRECTION, FROM
THE LAB FIRST,
THEN THE CLINIC.**

**THAT’S HOW
I CAME TO
UNDERSTAND
BOTH SIDES OF
THE JOURNEY.”**



LIFE
UNDER THE
MICROSCOPE
THE JOURNEY OF AN
IVF PIONEER



In 1988, IVF was still a daring experiment, and the first babies conceived through it were barely a decade old. Geraldine Emerson, now Laboratory Operations Director at Bourn Hall UAE, stepped into this pioneering world with courage, curiosity, and a mop in hand. From cleaning floors to leading a team that changes lives daily, her journey shows that behind every miracle is a blend of science, resilience, and unwavering hope.

STORIES

FROM THE LAB



Geraldine Emerson

Laboratory Operations Director
at Bourn Hall UAE

“I BEGAN BY MAKING THE CULTURE MEDIA, CLEANING THE LAB, AS EVERY PART OF THE LAB MATTERS.”

The world of IVF is built on science, precision, and courage, and no one understands this better than Geraldine, informally known as “Gerri” by her Bourn Hall family. Her journey began in 1988, a time when IVF was still a bold experiment rather than an established path to parenthood.

“FROM THE SMALLEST EMBRYO TO THE JOY OF A NEWBORN, EVERY MOMENT REMINDS ME WHY I BEGAN THIS JOURNEY.”

To put it in perspective, the very first IVF baby was just ten years old, and the first frozen baby born in Australia had only recently turned four. “It was truly pioneering times,” Geraldine recalls. “Couples were brave beyond measure, navigating long procedures with limited technology.”

Embryologists Should Be Fully Rounded Geraldine’s early training took place at Europe’s largest IVF clinic, performing 3,000 cycles a year. It was an intense environment, demanding precision, resilience, and innovation. Her first role in the lab?

Making the culture media, cleaning and maintaining the purified water system. “I learned that every part

of the lab, no matter how small, contributes to life-changing outcomes,” she says. “That’s why I believe an embryologist should be fully rounded, ready to take on any task, understand every corner of the lab, and appreciate the work that goes into every miracle.”

Pioneering Spirit at Every Step Looking back, she describes those early days as both challenging and exhilarating. “We didn’t have the advanced drugs or technology we have today. It was very much like the movie Joy, with pioneering

“EVERY EMBRYO, EVERY CYCLE, AND EVERY PATIENT’S JOURNEY, IS A REMINDER THAT SCIENCE AND HUMANITY ARE INSEPARABLE.”

spirit at every step. The courage of patients, combined with the dedication of the team, shaped my philosophy as an embryologist.” For Geraldine, IVF is not just a career, it is a calling. It’s a delicate balance of expertise and empathy, of meticulous care and hope.

“The best part of this work is seeing potential realised,” she says. “From the smallest embryo to the joy of a newborn, every moment reminds me why I began this journey, to help life bloom.”



Gerri When She First Arrived In The UAE.



WHEN HOPE **BLOOMED** INTO THREE

HOW ONE MOTHER'S FAITH TURNED INTO THREE TINY HEARTBEATS

By Esther Kimuyu

After ten long years of waiting, hoping, and heartbreak, one couple's dream of becoming parents finally came true in the most extraordinary way. Guided by Dr Shazia Magray, Specialist Reproductive Medicine and Infertility, and Medical Director, and the dedicated team at Bourn Hall Dubai, their journey through faith, science, and perseverance led to the birth of three beautiful boys, a miracle that touched everyone who witnessed it. This is their story, one of resilience, compassion, and the belief that hope never fades.



Please scan the QR code to watch
the full story of the triplets





Dr Shazia Magray
Specialist in Reproductive
Medicine and Infertility,
and Medical Director
at Bourn Hall Dubai

A JOURNEY OF HOPE

Ten years is a long time to wait for motherhood. Ten years of hope and heartbreak, of trying and praying, of daring to believe that maybe, just maybe, this time would be different. For one mother in the United Arab Emirates, that long wait finally ended in the most unexpected, extraordinary way imaginable: with the arrival of not one, not two, but three tiny miracles.

“When I first saw them,” she recalls, “I couldn’t stop crying. I cried the whole day. They were small, fragile, and perfect. After ten years of waiting, I was finally

a mother.” Her story began after a decade of disappointment and five unsuccessful IVF attempts elsewhere. By the time she walked into Bourn Hall Fertility Clinic in Dubai, she was tired but not entirely defeated. “I was 50 per cent hopeful,” she admits. “Part of me wanted to believe, but part of me was afraid to try again.” Under the care of Dr Shazia Magray, known for her warmth and quiet strength, everything changed. “Dr Shazia was more than a doctor,” she says softly.

“She was like a counsellor, always encouraging me to

hold on to faith.”

For Dr Shazia, this patient’s case is one she will never forget. “She came to me after years of infertility and five failed IVF cycles,”

Dr Shazia explains. “She had already enrolled in adoption agencies. This was meant to be her last attempt.”

The odds were stacked against her, poor egg quality, low sperm count, and the emotional exhaustion that shadows couples after years of trying. But with careful precision and renewed faith, the Bourn Hall team began one more cycle.

A photograph of three newborn babies lying together on a soft surface. The baby at the top is wearing a yellow knitted hat and sweater. The baby on the left is wearing a white lace-trimmed hat and a blue sweater. The baby on the right is wearing a blue knitted hat and sweater. All three babies are wearing matching knitted hats with two brown buttons on the front. The text 'WHEN SCIENCE MEETS GRACE' is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font on the lower left side of the image.

WHEN SCIENCE MEETS GRACE

The procedure itself was challenging, but the results offered a glimmer of hope. “We managed to get a few good embryos,” Dr Shazia recalls. “Usually, I’m very cautious about transferring more than one embryo because of the risks of multiple pregnancy. But given her history, I decided to bend my own rules and transfer two embryos.” No one could have predicted what happened next.

“This was something beyond science. It was grace.”

“Every heartbeat we help create reminds us that medicine and miracles can coexist.”

— Dr Shazia Magray

“Every tear, every prayer, it was all worth it.”

— Triplets’ Mother

“When she came back for her scan,” says Dr Shazia, smiling at the memory, “I saw the first heartbeat, such relief. Then a second heartbeat, wonderful news. But then... I saw a third.” It was a rare and beautiful surprise: a case of embryo splitting, where one of the embryos divides naturally into two, resulting in identical twins and a singleton.

THREE TINY HEARTS

“I could hear the couple screaming with joy,” Dr Shazia says. “And honestly, I didn’t know how to express myself. This was something beyond science. It was grace.”

The pregnancy was carefully monitored at Bourn Hall and later at Mediclinic hospitals as part of the continuum of care. Though the journey wasn’t easy, the outcome was nothing short of miraculous, three healthy baby boys: Yusuf, Ahmad, and Muhammad.

“They spent two months in the neonatal unit,” their mother remembers. “It was hard seeing them so small, but every day they grew stronger. The team was like family; they cared for us as if these babies were their own.” Today, at almost 5 years old, the triplets are thriving, and already little celebrities in their own right. “They’re

famous now,” Dr Shazia laughs. “They even have their own Instagram page, Triplets of UAE. It’s wonderful to see how far they’ve come.”

Looking back, their mother’s voice fills with emotion. “I had lost hope so many times,” she says. “But I learnt that patience really is the key, and faith in God gives you strength you didn’t know you had. When I see my children, I know every tear and every prayer was worth it.”

For Dr Shazia, stories like this are what define the heart of fertility medicine. “IVF is not just about science,” she reflects. “It’s about empathy, persistence, and belief. Every heartbeat we help create reminds us that medicine and miracles can coexist.”

At Bourn Hall UAE, part of Mediclinic Middle East, that blend of science and compassion is what transforms lives. Behind every success story are the embryologists, nurses, and physicians who dedicate themselves to bringing hope where there once was none.

This case, though remarkable, captures what Bourn Hall UAE stands for every single day, the pursuit of possibility, powered by care, guided by expertise, and touched by something greater.



A HEARTFELT MESSAGE FOR OTHER FAMILIES

To other couples still waiting for their miracle, the mother offers heartfelt words:

“Don’t lose hope,” she says. “God never leaves an honest heart unanswered. Keep believing. Keep trying. One day, your turn will come.”

Her story isn’t just about the miracle of three lives, it’s about the triumph of spirit, the partnership between medicine and faith, and the love that begins even before a child is born. Because sometimes, when science meets compassion, miracles come in threes.

FINDING BALANCE:

HOW STRESS, SLEEP, AND MOVEMENT SUPPORT REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH



Dr. Sajida Detho
Medical Director and
Consultant in Reproductive
Medicine and Infertility,
Bourn Hall Al Ain



Fertility is not just about the body, it's about the whole person. The mind, the emotions, and the way we move through daily life all influence the delicate balance that allows new life to begin.

Reproductive health depends on the harmony of the body's hormonal, emotional, and physical systems. Modern lifestyle stressors, sleep deprivation, and sedentary habits can disrupt this balance, impacting fertility, menstrual regularity, and even IVF outcomes.

For many people on their fertility journey, this connection can feel both empowering and overwhelming.

But as Dr Sajida Detho, Consultant in Reproductive Medicine and Infertility, and Medical Director at Bourn Hall Al Ain explains, learning to find balance, through calm, rest, and gentle activity, can make all the difference.



1. How does stress physiologically affect fertility?

When we experience stress, the body releases hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline. These are helpful in short bursts, but when stress becomes constant, they can interfere with the reproductive hormones that regulate ovulation and sperm production.

“Your body can’t tell the difference between emotional stress and physical danger,” Dr Sajida explains. “When you’re under pressure, it prioritises survival, not reproduction.” That’s why reducing stress isn’t just about feeling better emotionally, it can actually help restore the hormonal balance your body needs to conceive.

2. What types of exercise are safe and beneficial during treatment?

Gentle, consistent movement helps circulation, balances hormones, and releases endorphins, the body’s natural mood enhancers.

“Moderation is key,” Dr Sajida says. “We recommend low-impact activities like walking, yoga, or swimming. They reduce stress and improve blood flow to the reproductive organs without overburdening the body.” Excessive or high-intensity exercise, however, can sometimes have the opposite effect by triggering the stress response. The goal, she adds, is to move with kindness, not to push for performance.

3. Can mindfulness or relaxation techniques improve IVF outcomes?

The mind is a powerful partner in the fertility process. Studies show that mindfulness and relaxation techniques can reduce anxiety, improve emotional resilience, and even enhance IVF outcomes. “When patients learn to pause and breathe, they give their bodies permission to rest and reset,” says Dr Sajida. “That calm creates a more supportive environment for treatment to work.”



“The body blooms where the mind rests.”

— Dr Sajida

4. How can patients balance being proactive without becoming overwhelmed?

It's natural to want to do everything possible to increase your chances, but trying to control every detail can create pressure instead of peace.

“Fertility is a partnership between science and surrender,” Dr Sajida explains. “Do what you can, take your medications, eat well, stay active, and then allow the process to unfold. Over-management can drain the joy and energy that your body needs to heal.” She encourages patients to focus on progress, not perfection, and to trust the medical team guiding them.

5. What role does sleep play in reproductive health?

Sleep is the body's most natural form of healing. During deep rest, hormones that regulate fertility such as oestrogen, progesterone, and luteinising hormone are released and balanced.

“Think of sleep as the body's silent therapy,” says Dr Sajida. “It restores hormonal harmony, reduces inflammation, and strengthens your emotional wellbeing. Aim for seven to eight hours of quality rest each night, and create a calming bedtime routine; no screens, soft light, and a few deep breaths.”

EATING *for* FERTILITY

HOW SMALL CHOICES MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Simple ways you
can support your
body and balance
your hormones
naturally





Dr Limia Ibrahim

Specialist in Reproductive
Medicine and Infertility
at Bourn Hall Abu Dhabi

When it comes to fertility, what you eat can be one of your best allies, but it doesn't have to be complicated. Diet is not about perfection or cutting out everything you love. It's about nourishing your body so it can do what it's meant to do naturally.

We sat down with Dr Limia Ibrahim, Specialist in Reproductive Medicine and Infertility at Bourn Hall Abu Dhabi, where she gave us a crash course on fertility and nutrition, and how they are deeply connected, not through restriction, but through balance, awareness, and kindness to your body.





MY FAVOURITE TIP:

Fill half your plate with colour. the more vibrant your fruits and vegetables, the more antioxidants you're getting. In other words, "eat the rainbow".

THE ROLE OF HYDRATION IN HORMONE HEALTH

ARE THERE SPECIFIC NUTRIENTS OR FOODS THAT CAN SUPPORT FERTILITY FOR MEN AND WOMEN?

Absolutely. Fertility thrives when your body has the right building blocks, and those come from nutrient-rich foods. For women, foods high in folate, iron, omega-3 fatty acids, and antioxidants support egg quality and hormone balance.

Think green leafy vegetables, berries, oily fish, nuts, and seeds. For men, zinc, selenium, and vitamin C are essential for healthy sperm production and motility, which you can find in foods like eggs, lean meat, citrus fruits, and pumpkin seeds. But more than individual nutrients, it's the overall nutritional habits that matter: **a diet rich in whole foods, healthy fats, lean proteins, and colourful fruits and vegetables.**

WHAT ROLE DOES WEIGHT OR BMI ACTUALLY PLAY IN FERTILITY, AND WHAT'S MISUNDERSTOOD ABOUT IT?

BMI can be a useful guide, but it's not the whole story. What truly matters is metabolic health. This means how your body manages hormones, energy, and inflammation. We often see patients who are within a "normal" BMI range but have hormonal imbalances, and others with higher BMI who conceive easily once they turnaround their lifestyle habits for the better. So, rather than fixating your mind on numbers, I encourage focusing on how your body actually feels and functions.

A balanced diet, steady blood sugar levels, and regular movement can make a big difference in how your reproductive system responds, regardless of what the scale says.

HOW CAN SOMEONE MAINTAIN A HEALTHY DIET DURING THE EMOTIONAL UPS AND DOWNS OF TREATMENT?

Be gentle with yourself. Fertility treatment is emotionally intense, and it's okay if you don't eat perfectly all the time. Food should comfort you, not become another source of stress.

Try this: Focus on one small act of nourishment at a time. Maybe it's preparing a home-cooked meal, drinking enough water, or swapping processed snacks for fruits or nuts. Small, loving choices add up. If you're having a difficult day and all you can manage is a bowl of soup or a piece of toast, that's okay too. What matters is consistency, not perfection.

WHAT SIMPLE FOOD SWAPS OR HABITS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE WITHOUT STRICT DIETING?

Simple changes often have the biggest impact.

- Swap white bread or rice for whole grains to stabilise your energy.
- Replace sugary drinks with water or herbal teas.
- Include a source of protein with every meal. This can be eggs, lentils, yogurt, or fish.

CAN SUPPLEMENTS REALLY HELP, OR SHOULD FERTILITY PATIENTS FOCUS ON WHOLE FOODS FIRST?

Whole foods should always come first, because nutrients work best in their natural combinations. But supplements can help fill the gaps, especially for folic acid, vitamin D, and omega3-s, which are often hard to get enough of through diet alone.

I always recommend that patients talk to their fertility specialist before starting any supplement, as needs can vary. Supplements should support your diet, not replace it. Think of food as the foundation, and supplements as the gentle finishing touch.

Water is often overlooked, but it's for vital hormone regulation and cell function.

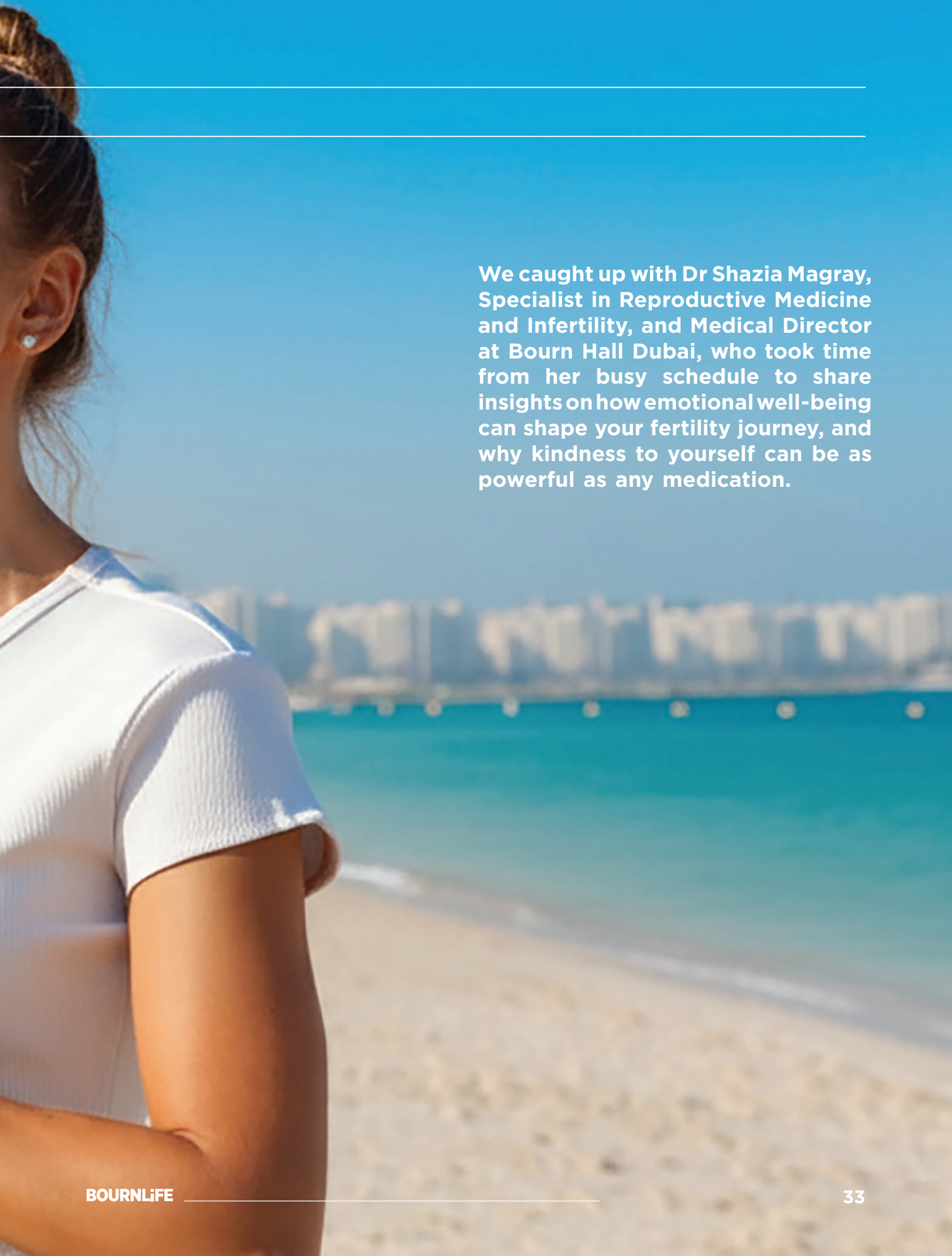
- Staying hydrated helps maintain cervical mucus quality and egg health.
- For men, hydration supports healthy semen volume and sperm motility.
- Aim for at least 2 litres a day, more if you're active or it's hot, like it usually is in the UAE.

“YOUR BODY IS DOING ITS BEST; NOURISH IT WITH LOVE, NOT RULES.”

— Dr Limia Ibrahim

YOU FIRST: WHY SELF- CARE MATTERS IN FERTILITY TREATMENT

FERTILITY TREATMENT CAN BE ONE OF THE MOST EMOTIONAL JOURNEYS A PERSON OR A COUPLE WILL EVER EXPERIENCE. AMID ALL THE TESTS, APPOINTMENTS, AND EXPECTATIONS, IT'S EASY TO FORGET ONE SIMPLE TRUTH: YOU MATTER, TOO. SELF-CARE IS NOT SELFISH, IT'S ESSENTIAL IN EVERY ASPECT OF YOUR LIFE.

A woman with her hair in a bun, wearing a white short-sleeved top, is shown in profile from the chest up. She is looking out over a bright blue sea towards a city skyline in the distance. The sky is clear and blue. Two horizontal white lines are visible at the top of the page.

We caught up with Dr Shazia Magray, Specialist in Reproductive Medicine and Infertility, and Medical Director at Bourn Hall Dubai, who took time from her busy schedule to share insights on how emotional well-being can shape your fertility journey, and why kindness to yourself can be as powerful as any medication.

How does emotional well-being affect fertility outcomes?

Our emotional state and physical health are deeply connected. When you're calm and emotionally supported, your body responds better to treatment. Stress, anxiety, and chronic worry can affect hormones and disrupt the delicate balance that fertility depends on. However, this doesn't mean you have to be happy all the time; that's impossible and unfair to expect. It simply means creating space for peace, even in small ways. Take time to breathe, rest, and do things that bring you joy. The mind and body are partners in this process, not separate entities.

What are some of the simple, practical self-care habits that you recommend for patients undergoing IVF or other treatments?

Start small. The best self-care habits are simple and consistent.

I often suggest:

- Going for short walks or light stretches every day.
- Keeping a gentle sleep routine; your body heals while you are at rest.

- Limiting social media if it makes you compare your journey to others.
- Journaling or meditating for a few minutes each morning.

And most importantly, celebrate small wins. Every injection, every scan you attend, every day you choose to keep going is a moment of courage. Recognise that strength.

Many patients struggle with anxiety during treatment. How can they show themselves compassion?

It's completely natural to feel anxious or even frustrated with yourself when things don't go as planned. But compassion begins with awareness, reminding yourself that you are doing your best. Try speaking to yourself as you would to a close friend. Would you criticise someone you love for feeling sad or tired? Of course not. You would comfort them, tell them it's okay to rest, and that tomorrow is another chance. Offer yourself that same grace.

And if it ever feels too heavy, speak to your doctor or counsellor. Sometimes, simply sharing your fears can lighten the load.







How can couples support each other emotionally through the IVF process?

Fertility treatment can test even the strongest relationships, but it can also bring couples closer when they learn to walk it together. Communicate openly, but also gently. Not every day has to be about test results or next steps, make time for normal conversations, laughter, and shared moments of calm.

Support doesn't always have to be in words.

Sometimes it's just being present, holding hands at an appointment, making a meal together, or listening without trying to fix things. That quiet understanding builds strength.

What are some myths about rest, relaxation, or "trying too hard" that you wish people understood better?

One of the biggest myths is that stress alone can prevent pregnancy, or that "trying too hard" will make it harder to conceive. These ideas only create guilt.

The truth is more compassionate: stress is a natural response to something important to you. It doesn't mean you're doing anything wrong. You don't need to force yourself to relax, just find small moments of ease. Even a few deep breaths, a cup of tea in silence, or time spent in nature can help your body feel supported.

And remember: You can't pour from an empty cup. Even hope needs rest.

"You can't pour from an empty cup, even hope needs rest."

— Dr Shazia Magray



5 EVERYDAY ACTS OF SELF-CARE FOR FERTILITY PATIENTS

- **Start your day slowly:**
A few deep breaths before reaching for your phone.
- **Create a comfort routine:**
A warm bath, soothing music, or quiet prayer.
- **Move gently:**
Yoga, walking, or stretching can help release tension.
- **Nourish yourself:**
Eat regularly, hydrate, and listen to what your body needs.
- **Disconnect to reconnect:**
Spend a few minutes outdoors, away from screens.



THE JOURNEY CONTINUES...



FROM FERTILITY TO FAMILY WITH MEDICLINIC BABY

Every dream that begins at Bourn Hall UAE continues to blossom at Mediclinic Baby, where science, compassion, and care come together to celebrate new life.



For thousands of families across the UAE, Mediclinic isn't just where babies are born; it's where stories begin. From the first heartbeat on a scan to the moment a mother holds her baby in her arms, Mediclinic Baby offers a journey defined by comfort, connection, and exceptional care.

FROM HOPE TO HOLDING

For many couples, the path to parenthood starts with fertility treatment at Bourn Hall, a journey guided by perseverance, belief, and the miracle of science. But once that long-awaited pregnancy test turns positive, another journey begins, one filled with

anticipation, joy, and questions. Mediclinic Baby ensures that every expectant mother, father, and family feels supported every step of the way. Across Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Al Ain, each Mediclinic maternity department offers the same world-class standards, blending advanced medical expertise with heartfelt personal care.



BEFORE BABY ARRIVES

Pregnancy is a time of transformation, both physical and emotional. Mediclinic's maternity services are designed to ease that journey, offering:

- **Family Planning & Pre-Pregnancy Guidance:** Personalised consultations to help parents prepare for a healthy pregnancy.
- **Complimentary Antenatal Classes:** Interactive sessions covering birth, breastfeeding, and newborn care.
- **Dedicated Maternity Hotline:** For all your pregnancy-related questions and reassurance when you need it most.
- **Mediclinic Baby Website & App:** A digital companion to track your pregnancy and access expert advice.
- **Gender Reveal Activations & Maternity Tours:** Gentle touches that make the experience joyful and memorable.

Each patient also receives a Mediclinic baby bag, a celebratory cake, and a gentle escort to their car, a small but beautiful way to end a life-changing stay.

DURING BIRTH: WHERE SAFETY MEETS TRANQUILITY

Whether delivering in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, or Al Ain, every Mediclinic maternity hospital provides the same promise: safety, serenity, and a personalised experience.

Expectant mothers are cared for by a multicultural team of obstetricians, midwives, and neonatal specialists, ensuring expert attention day and night.

Private and VIP suites offer comfort and privacy, complete with soothing amenities, from customised pillows and calming scents to celebratory meals and welcome packages for both mother and baby. Behind the warmth lies world-class medical support, including neonatal intensive care units (NICU) for premature or high-risk babies.

It's reassurance at its most comforting: the peace of mind that comes from knowing you and your baby are in expert hands.

AFTER BABY ARRIVES

The moment you hold your baby for the first time marks the beginning of a new chapter, and Mediclinic continues to walk beside you long after you leave the hospital.

Postnatal care includes:

- Complimentary newborn hearing screening
- Breastfeeding and lactation consultations
- Home visits by midwives in Dubai
- Dietitian and physiotherapy support for postnatal recovery
- Guidance for mothers experiencing baby blues or postpartum depression
- Discounts on baby vaccination packages for up to two years



THE CONTINUUM OF CARE

At MedClinic, the story doesn't begin with birth, it begins with hope. Through Bourn Hall's fertility expertise and MedClinic Baby's maternity excellence, families experience a seamless continuum of care, from conception to cradle.

It's a journey guided by science, supported by collaboration, and defined by compassion. And it ensures that every family's story, whether it began with a whisper of hope in a fertility clinic or a first cry in the delivery suite, unfolds within the same trusted hands. Because at MedClinic, every baby is more than a birth, it's the beginning of a life where hope has bloomed.





BOURN HALL UAE CLINICS EARN JCI ACCREDITATION

What is JCI Accreditation?

JCI is recognised globally as the gold standard for healthcare quality and patient safety.

Accreditation involves a detailed review of clinical systems, governance, and patient experience to ensure the highest international standards are met.

WELCOME TO



Bourn Hall

FERTILITY CLINIC

A UNIFIED MARK OF EXCELLENCE ACROSS DUBAI, ABU DHABI, AND AL AIN

“JCI STANDARDS ARE NOT JUST PROCEDURAL CHECKBOXES, THEY REPRESENT PATIENT SAFETY AND THE QUALITY OF CARE WE PROVIDE AT BOURN HALL UAE.”

In a major milestone for fertility care in the region, all three Bourn Hall Fertility Clinics in the UAE, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Al Ain, have now achieved accreditation from the Joint Commission International (JCI), one of the world’s leading authorities on healthcare quality and patient safety.

For Bourn Hall Dubai, this marks its third consecutive reaccreditation since first earning JCI’s prestigious Gold Seal of Approval in 2016, when it became the first standalone fertility centre in the Middle East to do so. For Abu Dhabi and Al Ain, this achievement represents

their first accreditation, uniting all three clinics under a shared global standard of excellence. “These standards are not just procedural checkboxes,” says Dr Weam Awwad, Director of Continuum of Care Business at Mediclinic Middle East.

“They represent patient safety and the quality of care we provide. We’re incredibly proud that all three Bourn Hall clinics now carry this international mark of excellence. Our patients can feel confident knowing their fertility journeys are supported by the highest standards of care at every step.”

A BENCHMARK FOR GLOBAL PRACTICE

To earn JCI accreditation, each Bourn Hall clinic underwent a rigorous evaluation by international inspectors, who examined every aspect of care, from infection control and laboratory precision to identity verification and

patient communication. “This isn’t just about meeting the minimum,” adds Dr Weam. “It’s about exceeding expectations, and building a culture where quality and safety are woven into every policy, every procedure, and every interaction.”



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT, CONSISTENT COMPASSION

The reaccreditation and new accreditations affirm Bourn Hall's ongoing commitment to clinical excellence, transparency, and personalised care. As Dr Weam explains, "fertility medicine is complex and deeply personal. These achievements show our promise to every patient, that their care will always be safe, ethical, and centred around their individual journey."

With this latest milestone, Bourn Hall UAE continues to set the regional benchmark for fertility care, combining world-class medical expertise with compassion and trust, the very heart of its legacy.

BOURN HALL UAE CLINICS EARN PRESTIGIOUS CAP LABORATORY ACCREDITATION



What is CAP Accreditation?

The College of American Pathologists Laboratory Accreditation Programme, established in the 1960s, is globally recognised as the most rigorous inspection system for laboratory quality, accuracy, and safety.





RAISING THE BAR FOR SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE IN FERTILITY CARE

Bourn Hall Fertility Clinic UAE, part of Mediclinic Middle East, has achieved the coveted College of American Pathologists (CAP) Laboratory Accreditation, a mark of international excellence that places it among an elite group of fewer than 8,000 accredited laboratories worldwide.

The accreditation follows a rigorous inspection of Bourn Hall's three state-of-the-art laboratories in Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Al Ain, underscoring the clinic's

unwavering commitment to precision, safety, and world-class laboratory standards.

"We are delighted to receive CAP accreditation, which is the gold standard of laboratory excellence," says Dr Weam Awwad, Director of Continuum of Care Business at Mediclinic Middle East.

"This is a major milestone for Bourn Hall UAE and reflects our dedication to delivering exceptional quality and care in every aspect of fertility treatment."


A NEW ERA OF TECHNICAL EXCELLENCE

According to Geraldine Emerson, Laboratory Operations Director at Bourn Hall UAE, this achievement represents more than compliance, it's about progress.

"Achieving CAP accreditation propels us into a new era of technical excellence," she explains. "It's a testament to our team's hard work and ensures that we can continue to offer even more advanced and precise treatments for our patients."

The CAP Laboratory Accreditation Program, recognised by the U.S. federal government, is regarded as being equal to or even more stringent than national inspection programmes.

Each evaluation assesses staff qualifications, equipment, facilities, safety protocols, and quality control systems, ensuring that every test and result meets the highest global standards.



TECHNOLOGY THAT TRANSFORMS LIVES

Bourn Hall UAE's laboratories integrate advanced technologies that have redefined fertility treatment outcomes. These include EmbryoScope™+ time-lapse systems that monitor embryos in undisturbed conditions, Cell-Tek Chambers that maintain optimal environments for embryo culture, and the RI Witness™ System, which ensures unparalleled traceability and security throughout every IVF cycle.

WHERE SCIENCE AND HOPE CONVERGE

This accreditation cements Bourn Hall's reputation as a leader in reproductive medicine, a place where advanced science meets compassionate care. As Dr Weam notes, "Our patients trust us with their most precious hopes. CAP accreditation is our promise to honour that trust with integrity, innovation, and excellence."

**"CAP ACCREDITATION IS OUR
PROMISE TO HONOUR OUR PATIENTS'
HOPES WITH INTEGRITY, INNOVATION,
AND EXCELLENCE."**

IVF MYTHS VS FACTS

DEBUNKING COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT IVF



Suhib Aleses

When it comes to fertility treatment, there's no shortage of myths, from internet rumours to well-meaning advice from friends and family.

To help separate fact from fiction, BournLife's Suhib Aleses had a quick chat with **Dr Shazia Magray**, Specialist in Reproductive Medicine and Infertility, and Medical Director at Bourn Hall Dubai, who set the record straight with clarity, honesty, and a dose of science.



Dr Shazia Magray
Specialist in
Reproductive Medicine
and Infertility, and
Medical Director at
Bourn Hall Dubai

MYTH 1: IVF always results in twins or triplets

FACT: Multiple pregnancies are less common than ever before.

“In the early days of IVF, transferring multiple embryos was more common,” explains Dr Shazia. “But today, thanks to improved laboratory technology and embryo selection, we often transfer just one high-quality embryo.”

MYTH 2: Age doesn't matter if you're using IVF

FACT: Age still plays a major role in fertility.

“IVF can improve your chances, but it doesn't stop the natural ageing process of eggs,” says Dr Shazia. “The quality and quantity of a woman's eggs decline over time, so the earlier you explore your options, like egg freezing, the better your outcomes may be.”

MYTH 3: IVF guarantees a %100 chance of pregnancy

FACT: No fertility treatment can promise success; however, IVF offers hope.

“IVF is one of the most effective fertility treatments available,” Dr Shazia explains. “However, success depends on many factors, including age, overall health, and the cause of infertility.”

MYTH 4: Stress can lower your chances of IVF success

FACT: True, but it's about balance, not perfection.

“Stress affects hormone balance and overall well-being,” says Dr Shazia. “While mild stress is normal, chronic stress can make the journey harder emotionally and physically.”

MYTH 5: IVF is only for women over 35

FACT: IVF can help women and men of any reproductive age who face fertility challenges.

“Many younger couples need IVF due to conditions like blocked tubes, endometriosis, or male factor infertility,” she explains.

LETTERS OF GRATITUDE

To

Dr Sajida Detho



Heartfelt thanks to Dr Sajida and Ms Zahra for their kindness and constant support. Dr Sajida's gentle approach and humility brought me great comfort, while Ms Zahra's care and encouragement made the journey easier. I am deeply grateful to you both.

To

Dr Ghada Hussein



After a long search for the right treatment, meeting Dr Ghada Hussein at Bourn Hall Abu Dhabi was a turning point. Her blend of knowledge, kindness, and unwavering optimism gave me comfort and confidence. She truly embodies hope, and because of her, my journey has been one of peace, faith, and renewed belief that good things are always on the way.

To

Dr Shazia Magray



After eight years of trying and two unsuccessful IVF cycles elsewhere, we had nearly lost hope. Then we met Dr Shazia, a blessing in every sense. Her compassion, expertise, and encouragement changed everything. Thanks to her and the entire Bourn Hall team, we now hold our baby boy, our greatest joy.

To

Dr Limia Ibrahim



My journey with Dr Limia and the Bourn Hall team has been nothing short of exceptional. Every member, from the reception to the lab, has shown genuine care and professionalism. Dr Limia's expertise and empathy, along with Geri's incredible work in the lab, make me feel deeply supported and hopeful. With their guidance, I truly believe my dream will come true.

To

Dr Larisa Schindler



To Dr Larisa Schindler and the entire Bourn Hall team — thank you hardly feels enough. Your empathy and dedication guided us through one of the most important chapters of our lives. After seven long years, we are overjoyed to share that our little one arrived just four days ago. Our hearts are full of gratitude — you've truly changed our lives forever.

OUR CORE SERVICES:



IVF / ICSI / IUI:

Advanced fertility treatments that help fertilise eggs and support successful pregnancy.



Family Balancing & Genetic Testing (PGT-A):

Screen embryos for genetic health or gender before transfer.



Egg Freezing:

Preserve your fertility now so you can plan for a family later.



Semen Freezing:

Protect and store sperm for future use.



Embryo Freezing:

Safely store embryos for later pregnancy attempts.



Female Fertility Treatments:

Hormonal, surgical or assisted options based on your individual diagnosis.



PRP Therapy (Ovarian / Endometrial):

Regenerative treatment that may enhance fertility response for some patients.



Recurrent Loss/Implantation Failure Support:

Diagnostics and treatment for repeated setbacks.

Bourn Hall

FERTILITY CLINIC

Part of **MEDICLINIC**

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AL AIN

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