

# CYSTS? What cysts?

**Amanda's IVF finally begins  
and her body turns traitor**

**The story so far**

Unable to have a baby naturally, Amanda and her hubby Paul decide on IVF. But then Paul is diagnosed with cancer. Suddenly the couple are fighting a far bigger battle — just to keep him alive. When Paul is finally given the all-clear, the couple restart the IVF process. This week, treatment begins — but the size of the needle is the least of Amanda's worries... (To read last week's story in full, go to [www.thatslife.co.uk](http://www.thatslife.co.uk).)



The needles and drugs are daunting

Sniffing my nasal spray is actually quite technical

The alarm goes off at 7.30am, but I'm already wide awake. It's D Day, or rather, Day 21 of my monthly cycle. The dreaded day of taking my first load of IVF drugs.

'How you feeling?' Paul asks. 'Bit scared,' I tell him.

I've been instructed to sniff a drug called Synarel twice in the morning, then again 12 hours on. This will 'down-regulate' my body, causing it to free-fall into a temporary menopause.

Later, I'll have to inject another drug, which will restart and boost egg production.

Reading the instructions on the nasal spray, I'm struck by their sheer complexity. How can stuffing a spray up your nose be so technical? It takes me five minutes just to understand how to 'prime' the thing!

Finally, I sniff twice and feel like I've leapt that first mental barrier.

Over the next few days, I seem to be constantly blowing my nose or sneezing. People must think I've either got hay fever, swine flu or worse, a serious drug problem —

although I can't imagine many druggies set their kitchen timers to remind them it's time for a fix! My IVF patient information sheet tells me to expect a withdrawal bleed after about a week, which should coincide with my period.

But when it's a few days late, as silly as it sounds, I start to believe I may have fallen pregnant.

I haven't, of course, and the bleed finally arrives with gusto. Even so, I'm cheered by the fact that if all goes to plan, I'll have my egg retrieval in just a few weeks.

So far, all my worries about the gruesome menopausal symptoms have been unfounded. Yes, I'm

having headaches and night sweats, but nothing that warrants the arrival of the men in white coats. I still feel like 'me'.

I wonder if the fear of something often outweighs the actual reality.

Three weeks after my first sniff, Paul and I go for my down-regulation blood test, to see if I'm ready for step two of the IVF.

'How have you been feeling?' the nurse asks. I tell her

about the night sweats, headaches and feeling emotional.

'Good!' she smiles. 'Sounds like you've down-regulated.'

The test results will hopefully confirm it tomorrow.

She then gets out a pen — which is actually a very modern, hi-tech syringe — and shows us how to inject the next IVF drug.

Until now, Paul had said he'd do the injections. But seeing the size of the needle, he says: 'It's a lot bigger than I expected it to be!'

When the nurse nips off, Paul can't get his words out quick enough: 'I think you should do it. I'm a bit heavy-handed.'

Next day, I ring for my results and get a big shock. I haven't succeeded in down-regulating.

'You probably just need more time,' the nurse says cheerfully, asking me to return the next day.

I tell Paul not to come — it's only another blood test.

But when two nurses usher me into one of the many rooms of the rabbit warren that is the fertility clinic, they say they also need to do an internal ultrasound.

The word 'cyst' is mentioned. Warning bells go off in my head.

'Mmm, yes, I'm afraid some small cysts have formed,' one says. 'And the lining of your womb is thickening.'

I'm now completely confused — and very emotional. Forcing back frustrated tears, I try to take

on board what she's telling me. 'Sometimes this happens,' she says. 'Cysts form as the body tries to block the Synarel.'

OK. Now this is all too much for me. I'm not happy.

'It'll only put you back a few weeks,' she adds, trying to sound upbeat. And that's when I lose it and start blubbing.

'I've already had to put this off for a year!' I splutter angrily, crying as I ramble on incoherently about Paul's cancer, and how I've just got to have his baby. Thankfully

I manage to pull myself together before having a total meltdown.

Both nurses are lovely to me. 'You will get there,'

Bridget says, holding my hand.

I apologise for the dramatics and blow my nose, while they tell me to keep sniffing the Synarel.

As I walk to my car, I ring Paul. 'I'd feel like chucking the towel in if I were you,' he sympathises.

'I'd be totally fed up.'

'Yes, that's exactly how I feel,' I say, so glad he understands. But we both know I can't give up now.

Although it's taking a lot longer and is much rougher than we'd anticipated, I'll be continuing down this path regardless.

**AMANDA REVELL WALTON, 40, HIGHWORTH, WILTSHIRE**

We'll catch up with Amanda soon as she receives some fantastic news. But then things start to go wrong again...



Paul and I won't give up

Photos: Tracey Griffin