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## **Supplement Information:**

### **DHEA**

#### **What Is DHEA? What are the benefits of taking DHEA?**

Your body naturally produces the hormone dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA) in the adrenal gland. In turn, DHEA helps produce other hormones, including testosterone and estrogen. Natural DHEA levels peak in early adulthood and then slowly fall as you age.

These hormones present in both sexes. These hormones are present in ovary and helpful for the production and development of eggs. In an infertility setting, particularly in conjunction with IVF, DHEA is thought to be useful to treat women with reduced ovarian reserve. However, research so far did not show any significant benefit.

#### **How DHEA Works?**

DHEA supplementation helps women with low reserve by increasing the androgen levels within their ovarian environments to a healthy range. As their immature eggs develop to the ovulation-ready stage in the androgen-enhanced ovarian environment, these eggs mature into better-quality eggs. High-quality, healthy eggs develop into high-quality embryos, which have better chances of implantation and lower risks of miscarriage.

#### **Is DHEA licenced?**

No. There is no research evidence to support its use. It is available as a food supplement on the internet.

#### **Which women should use DHEA supplement for IVF?**

All women over 40 and younger women with the low ovarian reserve are advised to take at least 6-8 weeks of DHEA supplementation before starting IVF. DHEA dosage for fertility is 75mg daily, (three

25mg doses). We may see a peak effect after 12 weeks of supplementation. As mentioned above, there is no evidence to support DHEA in poor responders.

### **Is DHEA suitable for everyone?**

It is important to note that alone, DHEA for fertility is unlikely to be useful for women with a reduced ovarian reserve who are trying to conceive. Not all women have reduced androgen levels in the ovary. The individualisation of the protocols is the key. It is advisable to measure androgen levels and DHEAS levels to find out the origin of low androgen in ovary if at all, it is present. If androgens in ovarian micro-environment are low due to low DHEAS (adrenal origin) it may make sense to add DHEA supplement.

### **Is DHEA safe to take?**

Adverse side effects of DHEA are possible but rare, include:

- Oily skin
- Acne
- Hair loss
- Stomach upset

Do not take DHEA when you are pregnant. Close monitoring of androgen and SHBG is necessary during DHEA supplementation. We strongly discourage women from DHEA self-supplementation.

### **How to order? And further information?**

Contact – [admin@p4fertility.co.uk](mailto:admin@p4fertility.co.uk)