

'Natural' IVF simpler, possibly safer than conventional method

More than five million people worldwide born through IVF since the arrival in 1978 of the world's first "test tube" baby, Louise Brown, whose [autobiography is out this month](#). Brown, now 37, was conceived without high levels of the powerful hormonal drugs used in conventional IVF to boost egg production, which can have unpleasant and sometimes dangerous side effects.

But is fertility treatment turning full circle, returning to those early "natural" methods? Natural IVF – the method by which Brown was conceived – works with a woman's natural cycle to collect and fertilise the one naturally-selected egg she produces that month. Modified natural IVF is almost the same but uses very low doses of fertility medication for two to three days, to encourage collection of a naturally produced egg.

In sharp contrast, conventional treatment involves at least a month of daily injections of high-dose drugs. First, the woman takes two weeks of medication to slam the brakes on her menstrual cycle, creating an artificial menopause. For a further two weeks she also takes a drug called follicle stimulating hormone (FSH) to jump-start her ovaries and encourage them to produce several eggs instead of a single one. Finally, she has an injection of a hormone called human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG) to help her eggs mature so they can be collected, mixed with sperm in a lab and one or two resultant embryos inserted into her uterus with the hope she will fall pregnant.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Are milder IVF methods the way forward?](#)