



you and me and science makes three. maybe.

## the concept

The first baby conceived by in vitro fertilization was born in 1978. In the decades since, more than 10 million babies have come into the world thanks to it. It's a global industry expected to reach \$48 billion a year by 2030.

But IVF isn't easy. While 15% of couples in the US discover that they're infertile, and spend an average of \$20,000 on the process — 55% say it's more stressful than unemployment. 61% say it's more destabilizing than divorce.



IVF is miraculous. IVF is maddening.

**IVF'd** is a serialized comedic drama that explores this.

## the main character



Meet Dr. Alexandra Bloom, 35. Alex for short.

She's a reproductive endocrinologist at Fertile Ground, one of the 450 fertility clinics in the US where — despite the faint scent of bleach — babies are made. She was drawn to fertility medicine because the work is, quite literally, creating lives. Let's just say she's developed something of a god complex.

Alex is one of the top fertility doctors in the country. Her success rate is through the roof, and she loves trying new approaches. But her tone often rubs patients the wrong way. She has trouble seeing them as more than problems to be solved. She can't be bothered to give them warmth, and lacks the filter that keeps her from saying exactly what's on her mind. While she's a classic control freak, she thinks that she's Joan Jett.

In Alex's mind, her patients have done something "wrong." So when she realizes it's been six months since she and her husband started trying to have a baby — and that *she* might be infertile — Alex is thoroughly destabilized. Her arc in the series is two-fold: toward becoming a mother and learning to have empathy for the people she treats.

**“I do the world's smallest surgeries — a single egg and a single sperm.  
That to me is like, the coolest thing.”**

— David, 40, reproductive endocrinologist at a swank NYC clinic

**“During embryo transfers, patients always make the joke: ‘Please make sure  
they’re mine.’ That's kind of like joking with TSA about the bomb in your shoe.”**

— Leslie, an embryologist in Brisbane, Australia

## the world

*IVF'd* drops us into a top-tier fertility clinic, like sperm in a sample cup. In many ways, Fertile Ground is your typical workplace — the staff members butt heads, flirt, and gossip. But while it's just another day at the office, the patients coming in the door are going through one of the most trying times of their lives. Women get injections that swell their ovaries to the size of melons. Men jerk off in claustrophobic rooms. An Adele song in the waiting room can cause a spontaneous explosion of tears.

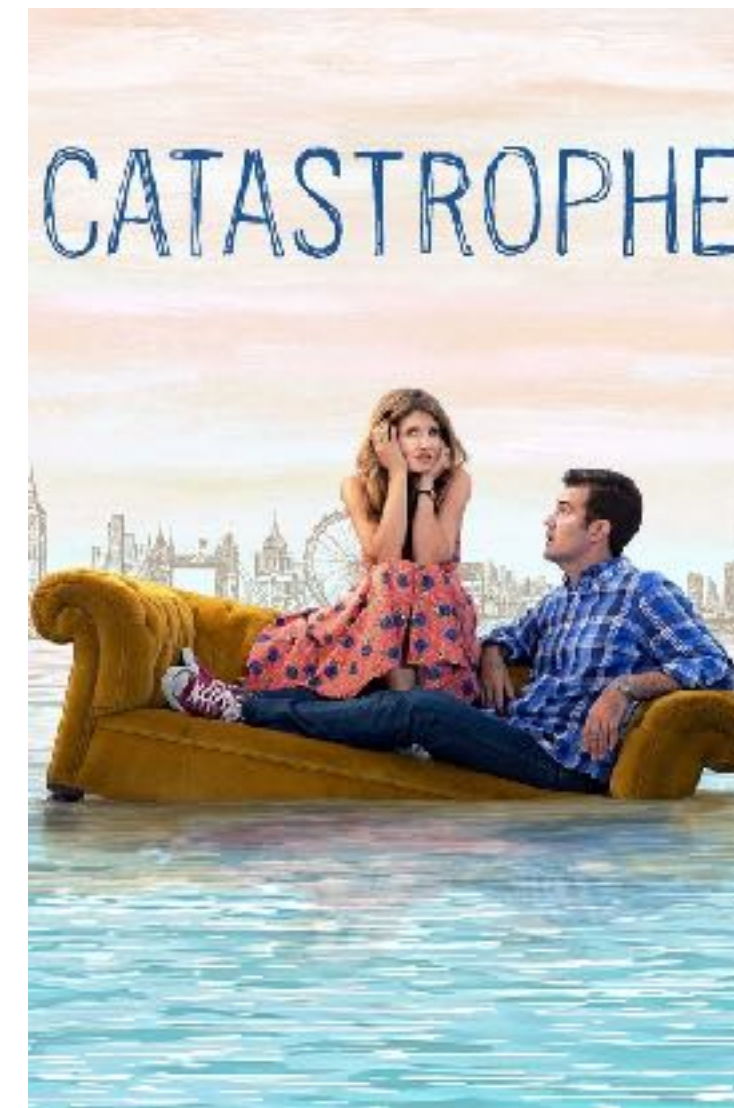
Through Alex, we'll get a 360-degree view of this clinic, meeting all the characters who inhabit it — the patients, the nurses, the lab techs, and of course, the other doctors. Through Alex, we'll highlight the rapid innovation happening in this space, while showing the intensity of emotions that come with the process. All while creating a show that's instantly relatable for anyone who's ever wanted something they can't have.



## the series

In each episode of *IVF'd*, we'll see Alex in her white lab coat, diving excitedly into hard cases and rolling her eyes at the easy ones. At the same time, we'll see her going through fertility treatment herself. We'll see her anger at her body. Her frustration at not being in control. Her hormonal volatility that makes her want to throw things every time one of her patients gets a positive pregnancy test.

*IVF'd* brings together *Grey's Anatomy's* deep understanding of what motivates doctors with the absurdist world of *Orange is the New Black*. With a main character more like Sharon Horgan in *Catastrophe*. Half soap and half procedural, *IVF'd* is entirely addictive. An offbeat look at medicine, relationships, parenthood — and above all, our desire for control over our lives.



“My Amazon history tells the story: 6 jumbo packs of pregnancy tests, 4 packs of ovulation sticks, 4 bottles of Mucinex (cause sperm swim faster when you’re on decongestants), and a case of raspberry leaf tea to accompany the pineapple cores I was eating to ‘exercise’ my uterus.”

– Erin, 30, who did two IVF cycles before having twins

“I had this 18-year-old employee who got two girlfriends pregnant at the same time, and here I am on aggressive steroids trying to have a child with my wife of seven years. Fuck that guy. ”

– John, 42, now the father of a 7-year-old daughter

## other characters

### Dr. Simon Turner, 58

With his philosopher's glasses and poetic way with words, Simon is the Neil deGrasse Tyson of fertility medicine. He's enthralled by the science and often finds himself asking, "Isn't it wondrous?"

Simon has been Alex's mentor since medical school. He's a pioneer who opened Fertile Ground 30 years ago, when a 20% success rate was the dream. He can't believe how far things have come.

But the frenetic advancement has also left him feeling like he can't keep up. He's having a crisis of confidence — he's not up on the latest techniques or remembering details like he used to. He's also not ready to admit that.

Simon works hard to help the younger doctors at Fertile Ground smooth out their rough edges. He sees a lot promise in each, but knows none is the full package. Yet.

His arc: to feel secure in his legacy.







## other characters

### Dr. Rachel Gemini, 42

Fertile Ground's staff OB-GYN, Rachel is bright-eyed and bubbly. The yin to Alex's yang, Rachel's patients adore her. She listens intently, gives helpful advice, and offers hugs at the end of each appointment.

A proud mom, Rachel extends her nurturing to all around her. She spends a lot of energy pumping others up, and she finds it: exhausting. She gives, gives, gives then feels frustrated when she doesn't get. Her marriage ended abruptly, and dating ... hasn't been awesome. She doesn't realize that she's looking to her co-workers and patients for love.

Because she does pap smears and treats STDs, Rachel feels her work doesn't get enough respect. Her friendship with Alex is strained for this reason. And she's pulled to Nigel because he feels the same way too.

Her arc: to find balance in her relationships.

## other characters

### Dr. Nigel Shahidi, 38

Fertile Ground's staff urologist, Nigel is a second-generation Iranian-American and aging fratboy. Obsessed with sports, he sees "bro" as a nice descriptor.

Smart and cocky, he is used to being the best. He's sick of playing second-fiddle to Alex — and he's pressuring Simon to hold her accountable for her bad attitude.

A longtime bachelor, Nigel uses the nursing staff as his dating pool. But recently, he's realized he has feelings for Rachel. And he's not sure what to do about it.

His arc: to feel like enough, in and of himself.





## other characters

### Neil Bloom, 36

Alex's husband Neil is smart and quick-witted. A creative director in advertising, he's a sharp dresser and major aesthete. He'll spend a month making a Halloween costume.

Neil was a pot dealer in high school, and while he's gotten his shit together, you can kinda still see it. He's Ashton Kutcher testifying before Congress — slick, but with a goofy authenticity.

Neil adores Alex's bluntness. And while he thinks her work is incredible, he's also sick of coming second to it. He's ready for Alex to put him first.

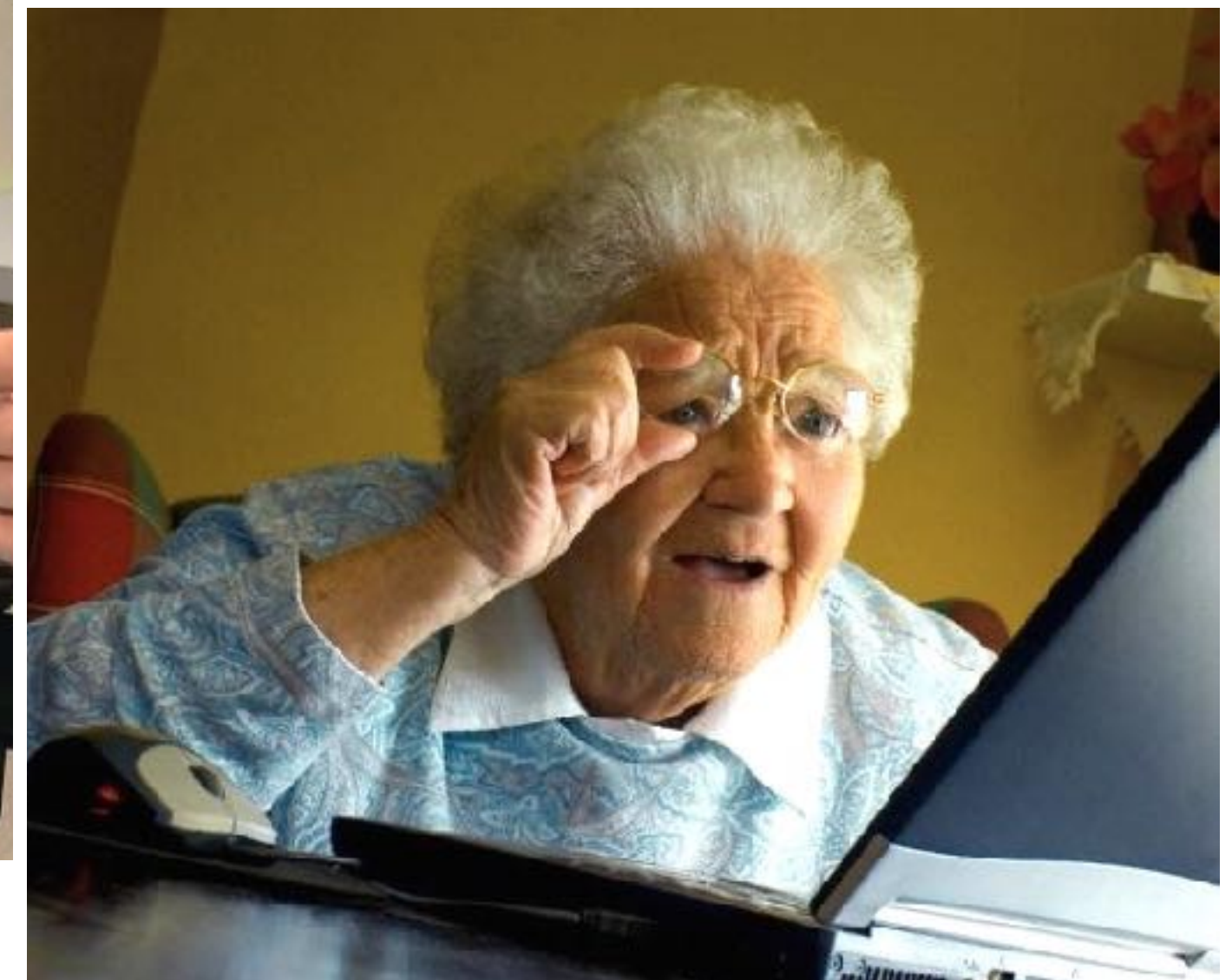
He can't wait to have a baby — because, while he loves his life, it all feels a little flippant. He's hoarding baby clothes and making models of the nursery, as he thinks that being a dad will give him meaning.

His arc: to find a sense of purpose.

## other characters

### Support Staff

*IVF'd* also introduces us to the folks who keep Fertile Ground running: the hot male nurse who everyone crushes on, the nurse who's a female bodybuilder in her spare time, the embryologist who sees herself as a cog in the machine. There's also the elderly receptionist who orders the clinic's porn, the lab director who can't look patients in the eye, and the physician's assistant who leaves test result voicemails that sound "Wassup, girlfriend" chatty.



## other characters



## The Patients

Some patients make single-episode appearances; others have longer arcs that unfold over seasons. We'll get to know patients in the clinic, as they get the low-down on their issues. Then we'll see them out in the real world, trying to follow through on treatment plans: a woman panicking when her plane is stuck on the tarmac and she needs a shot; a guy losing it over a long weekend as he waits for test results; a couple being mistaken for junkies when doing an injection in a public restroom.

“On the morning of our embryo transfer, I made eggs for breakfast, which seemed appropriate. I remember looking forward to the moment when the word ‘egg’ would mean a chicken’s again.”

– Elizabeth, 37, who was anti-IVF before doing it herself

“We’d go in at 8am, and I’d have to jerk off in this tiny room with porn. I was terrified to touch anything, so I’d just kneel down on my pants.”

– Mike, 38, who spent over \$30k on IVF

## season one arc

Amid all the successes, heartbreaks, and drama at Fertile Ground, season one follows Alex and Neil through the first phase in fertility treatment: figuring out what the heck is wrong. This involves a lot of tests. A lot of waiting. And a lot of stress. Each new test eliminates a possibility, but also closes a door on options.

We'll see the Blooms move through the first inconclusive months, to mid-season when they finally make the call to go forward with IVF, to the season finale, when Alex is over the moon to see a positive pregnancy test — only to have a miscarriage. Through it all, the Blooms will wonder: Is it him? Is it her? Are they meant to be parents? Are they even meant to be together?



## season one arc

*IVF'd* tells the serialized story of an infertile fertility doctor. But each episode also stands on its own, with a self-contained fertility story that the doctors at Fertile Ground must solve. Each episode weaves together multiple stories around a theme. For example:

**Repeat Customer.** As Alex and Neil get bad news from a test, Simon helps a couple who's already had two kids from the same cycle get pregnant — again. Alex hides her dismay in a fascinating case: a patient who wants to use embryos frozen by her mother 20 years ago. Meanwhile, Rachel is thrown when she's asked to be in her ex-husband's wedding party.

**Late to the Party.** As the doctors of Fertile Ground prep for a 30 year celebration gala, Alex angles to help a 30-something party girl who discovers she has the ovaries of a 50-year-old. Simon makes a stupid mistake in a tricky case.

**Chosen People.** Alex's latest patients: a Hasidic couple. She wants to create a "three-parent embryo," so they don't pass on their genetic predisposition to a debilitating disease. When the other doctors at Fertile Ground object, Nigel becomes her only ally. And as Neil starts taking testosterone, he feels on top of his game — but his co-workers think he's being an asshole.

**The Thrill of Success.** When Alex takes a pregnancy test, something crazy happens: it's finally *positive*. A lesbian couple echoes their glee, as after two years of browsing sperm catalogues, they've found the perfect donor they can both agree on. They proceed to hoard his sperm. While Simon tries a new supplement to boost his memory.

**Rock Bottom.** Alex has an ectopic pregnancy. Simon prescribes methotrexate, a drug Alex has prescribed so many times without realizing how horrendous it is. Rachel has a meltdown after she and Nigel go on their first date.



## and many more stories...

After interviewing dozens of people who've worked in fertility clinics and been through fertility treatment, the potential for stories here feels limitless. Here are 20 ideas, culled from my list of 100+:

1. A military couple wants to freeze embryos before the husband is deployed. Just in case.
2. Simon tries to dissuade a woman in her 50s who wants to try IVF. When he won't take the case, Alex steps in.
3. A couple sells their wedding rings to afford treatment.
4. When Rachel gets sick, Alex covers her IVF prep class and it's a disaster.
5. Simon works with a lesbian couple that wants to use one of their younger brothers as a sperm donor. Their family is freaking out.
6. An online troll targeting IVF message boards discovers he's infertile.
7. Simon suspects that somehow, despite all the labeling and name-checking, two of his patients' embryos got swapped.
8. When a couple gets into a fight doing the paperwork, Rachel rallies the doctors to save their marriage.
9. Fertile Ground begins an embryo adoption program, where couples can buy and sell fertilized eggs.
10. An Evangelical couple wrestles with how IVF fits into their faith.
11. Alex and Rachel set up a booth at a gay family expo.
12. Nigel's newest patient is a guy who bullied him in school.
13. One of Alex's patients has an unfortunate side effect from her injections that just doesn't make any sense.
14. A gay couple wants to both submit sperm for a surrogate — and not know whose sperm took.
15. The wife in a couple Alex is treating has an affair — and gets knocked up. She wants advice on an abortion.
16. A celebrity couple visits Simon so they can select the gender of their baby (even though they aren't actually infertile).
17. A woman discovers her husband has a steroid problem when they start treatment.
18. Rachel has a patient who is furious at her for prescribing the morning-after pill years ago — because now she can't conceive.
19. An IVF mom deals with postpartum depression, and feels crazy because having a child was what she wanted so badly.
20. A woman wants to extract sperm from her husband in a coma, and the Fertile Ground docs don't know how to feel about it.

## our biggest challenge

How do we keep *IVF'd* running for years, when it revolves around a process that typically takes about a year? This hinges on the fact that only 33% of IVF cycles result in a pregnancy. A lot of people are not successful the first time around – and some couples end up doing 6, 7, or 8 cycles, over years. We imagine it will be well into the show's run before Alex finally finds out she is pregnant, for keeps. And then, we think she'll have twins. *Because the only thing harder than infertility? Actually becoming a parent.*



## why this, why now?


Anyone who has been through IVF knows how isolating, all-consuming, and often-humiliating it can be. Right now, IVF, infertility, miscarriages – these are experiences people don't really talk about. But that is starting to change. Jennifer Aniston, Kristen Wiig, Gabrielle Union, Amy Schumer, Kim Kardashian, Chrissy Teigen, Tyra Banks, even Celine Dion have all come out of the IVF closet. People are realizing that infertility doesn't need to be shouldered alone.

As people continue starting families later and later in life, IVF is only going to become more common. **People are hungry to talk about these issues**, and *IVF'd* could crack a dialogue wide open. This show will give people a way to talk about fertility struggles, and permission to laugh at the absurdity of it all.

But of course, **this isn't just a show for those who've experienced infertility**, any more than *Orange is the New Black* is for people who've spent time in jail. *IVF'd* is a show about how painful it can be to want what you can't have. About ambition and purpose, and our desire to control our own lives. About love and relationships. And families of all shapes and sizes, conceived in any way you can imagine.

“I have the world’s greatest job. It is the most exhilarating thing when you do a positive pregnancy test, or someone’s first ultrasound. The look on their face when they see their baby move? It’s incredible. Absolutely intoxicating.”

– David, 36, reproductive endocrinologist at a swank NYC clinic

The background features a dense field of black sperm cells with long, wavy tails, swimming towards the center. Interspersed among them are several large, clear, spherical eggs, some of which are in focus, showing their internal structure. The overall scene is set against a light, neutral background.

made with **love**  
and **science**

**IVF'd is (pro)created by:**  
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*Based on the blog "[IVeffed](#)" by Lizz Torgovnick*



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