

FERTILITY MADE EASY

EXCERPT

How common is infertility?

Infertility is classically defined as a year of trying unprotected sex without conception. Infertility today affects one out of every six couples.

The reality is that it's much harder to get pregnant than many of us believe.

It used to be thought that infertility was primarily a woman's problem, but that is not the case. Men and women are affected almost equally, with 30% due to male factors, 30% due to female factors. The other 40% is often due to a mixture of problems, or is referred to as "unexplained."

But the trend today is putting more of the focus on women.

The social trend of delaying childbearing – the older age of women when trying to conceive – is the single biggest factor in infertility today.

What causes infertility in women?

Irregular menstrual cycles are a common reason for infertility. Absent or infrequent periods, prolonged and excessive bleeding, and bleeding or "spotting" between periods can all make it difficult to predict when ovulation will occur so that a couple can make a baby.

There are also a number of diseases and conditions that can contribute to infertility. Smoking and weight also play a role. Smoking can reduce a woman's chances of getting pregnant by affecting ovulation, and miscarriage occurs at a higher rate among pregnant women who smoke. And according to the American Society of Reproductive Medicine (ASRM), about 12% of all cases are because a woman weighs too much or too little.

But many experts believe age is the biggest cause of female infertility, playing more of a role for women than for men. Age plays a key role because the number of available eggs drops dramatically as a woman ages, as does the chromosomal normality of each egg.

Women have seven million eggs as a fetus, 1 to 2 million when they are born, 600,000 when they hit puberty, And every month she wastes 500 eggs to ovulate the

one good egg, and many times it's not a good egg. By age 40, 97% of the eggs she had at puberty are gone.

Men, on the other hand, are constantly making fresh sperm every 90 days so those cells remain young and healthy even though the man is older.

So while there is a measurable decline in male fertility with age, it's very modest. Whereas with women it's very clearly defined. Pretty much over the age of 44 female fertility approaches zero.

What causes infertility in men?

The most common reasons for male infertility are issues with how the testicles create and dispense sperm, hormone imbalances, or blockages in the male reproductive organs. Obstructions in the tubes that transport sperm from the testicles to the penis, either naturally occurring or via vasectomy, account for up to 20% of male cases of infertility.

A complete lack of sperm is the factor for about 10% to 15% of male infertility; low sperm counts and malformed sperm are more reasons. Physical issues, such as injuries to the testicles, radiation and chemotherapy, the failure of testicles to drop, or an enlargement of veins in the scrotum called varicocele, can all contribute as well.

Diabetes can cause erectile dysfunction and ejaculatory issues due to a reduced blood flow from vascular damage; such as hyperthyroidism, can affect sperm count and mobility. Hormones affect sperm production, too.

Endocrine abnormalities can cause it, low testosterone can be a factor. There are genetic causes of infertility in men and some of it is chromosomal, in that they are missing a piece or have extra chromosomes. Infectious disease like mumps or sexually transmitted diseases and infections can have an impact on sperm production as well.

Even if the testicles produce viable sperm, there can be issues in how well a man's sperm moves to accomplish its goal of fertilization. Sperm can swim too slowly, or not at all, basically dying before they reach the female egg.