

Infertility

Infertility unfortunately can affect many couples trying to conceive a baby.

It is the inability to conceive a child after a year or more of sexual intercourse without contraception.

What to look for

If after a period of unprotected intercourse, the couple cannot conceive, this is infertility. It can be because of either partner or both.

This can be very distressing for many couples and is taken as a sign of inadequacy. Please keep in mind being infertile does not necessarily indicate sterility.

Causes

Infertility in men can be the result of low sperm production, no sperm or sperm which do not swim as they should do as well as a tubes blockage.

In women, infertility can be caused by a failure to ovulate due to a hormone failure. Interruption of an egg's progress through the fallopian tube from ovary to uterus may also be a cause.

Women's age is a factor: as after 35 years of age it is often more difficult to conceive. Being overweight, or underweight, can also play a role.

In both men and women, fertility can be diminished by psychological factors, such as [anxiety](#) and [depression](#), and by environmental agents.

Treatment

Your doctor will perform many tests on both partners to determine the cause of the infertility.

There are not ways to increase the chances of conception.

Couples are often advised to have intercourse just before ovulation.

Ovulation can be induced with the use of fertility drugs or hormones.

Certain disorders occurring in men can be treated with a doctor's help.

IVF (in vitro fertilization) is an option for couples who are infertile. The egg is fertilized outside the woman's body, and then placed in the womb or fallopian tube.

Alternative/Natural Treatments

A variety of alternative treatments may enhance fertility.

- Relaxation Techniques – [Stress](#) can often hinder conception and there are different relaxation techniques can reduce stress which sometimes contributes to infertility.
- Dietary Considerations – Zinc is important for fertility in both sexes; a supplement may help. Vitamin C has been shown to aid men whose sperm clump together, and it may improve sperm count. Ask for professional advice with regards to the appropriate doses.
- The diet of both partners should include plenty of fresh vegetables and fruit and a high potency multi-vitamin. Men need more vitamin C. Reduce the amount of caffeine and alcohol as they make the system more acidic.
- Herbal Treatments – As mentioned above, Zinc is often recommended as well as vitamin E. Take goldenseal, raspberry leaf or red clover tea.

Personal Care

For women:

- Don't douche.
- After intercourse, remain lying down for a few minutes.
- Avoid becoming too tired or too stressed.

For men:

- Avoid [excessive alcohol](#).
- Stay healthy; a bad [cold or flu](#) can depress sperm count for up to three months.
- Keep testicles cool; avoid saunas, hot tubs, and close-fitting underwear.

When to seek further professional advice

- You desire a child but have not conceived after a year of trying.