

Infertility Myths and Facts

Infertility is a women's problem.

This is untrue. It surprises most people to learn that infertility is a female problem in 35% of the cases, a male problem in 35% of the cases, a combined problem of the couple in 20% of cases, and unexplained in 10% of cases. It is essential that both the man and the woman be evaluated during an infertility work-up.

Everyone seems to get pregnant at the drop of a hat.

More than five million people of childbearing age in the United States experience infertility. When you seek support, you will find that you are not alone. Join RESOLVE, a support group, or talk with others who are struggling to build a family, so that you won't feel isolated.

It's all in your head! Why don't you relax or take a vacation. Then you'll get pregnant!

Infertility is a disease or condition of the reproductive system. While relaxing may help you with your overall quality of life, the stress and deep emotions you feel are the result of infertility, not the cause of it. Improved medical techniques have made it easier to diagnose infertility problems.

Don't worry so much -- it just takes time. You'll get pregnant if you're just patient.

Infertility is a medical problem that may be treated. At least 50% of those who complete an infertility evaluation will respond to treatment with a successful pregnancy. Some infertility problems respond with higher or lower success rates. Those who do not seek help have a "spontaneous cure rate" of about 5% after a year of infertility.

If you adopt a baby you'll get pregnant!

This is one of the most painful myths for couples to hear. First it suggests that adoption is only a means to an end, not a happy and successful end in itself. Second, it is simply not true. Studies reveal that the rate for achieving pregnancy after adopting is the same as for those who do not adopt.

Why don't you just forget it and adopt? After all, there are so many babies out there who need homes!

For many, adoption is a happy resolution to infertility. However, most people explore medical treatment for infertility prior to considering adoption. In addition, traditional adoption options have changed, and adoption can be more costly and time-consuming than expected. It is, however, still possible to adopt the healthy baby of your dreams. There are also many older children and children with special needs available for adoption.

Maybe you two are doing something wrong!

Infertility is a medical condition, not a sexual disorder.

My partner might leave me because of our infertility.

The majority of couples do survive the infertility crisis, learning in the process new ways of relating to each other, which deepens their relationship in years to follow.

Perhaps this is God's way of telling you that you two aren't meant to be parents!

It is particularly difficult to hear this when you are struggling with infertility. You know what loving parents you would be, and it is painful to have to explain to others that you have a medical problem.

Infertility is nature's way of controlling population.

Zero population growth is a goal pursued in a time of world overpopulation, but it still allows for couples to replace themselves with two children. Individuals or couples can certainly elect the option to be childfree or to raise a single child. Infertility, for those who desire children, denies them the opportunity to choose.

I shouldn't take a month off from infertility treatment for any reason... I just know that this next month will be THE one!

It is important periodically to reassess your treatment and your parenting goal. Continuity in treatment is important, but sometimes a break can provide needed rest and renewal for the next steps.

I'll be labeled a 'trouble maker' if I ask too many questions.

The physician/patient team is important. You need to be informed about what treatments are available. What is right for

one couple may not be right for another, either physically, financially, or emotionally. Don't be afraid to ask questions of your doctor.

A second opinion can be helpful. If needed, discuss this option with your physician.

I know I'll never be able to stop treatment until I have a pregnancy.

I've lost interest in my job, hobbies, and my friends because of infertility. No one understands! My life will never be the same!

Pregnancy is not the only pathway to parenthood. You may begin to think more about parenthood than about pregnancy. You may long for your life to get back to normal. You may consider childfree living or begin to think of other ways to build a family. Infertility is a life crisis -- it has a rippling effect on all areas of your life. It is normal to feel a sense of failure that can affect your self-esteem and self-image. You will move through this crisis. It is a process, and it may mean letting go of initial dreams. Throughout this process, stay informed about the wide range of options and connect with others facing similar experiences.

GENERAL INFERTILITY ADVICE

Dump your OBGYN...They are too busy taking care of pregnant women and delivering babies. They have an emotional interest in holding you at arm's length; they can get much easier satisfaction from their next appointment with a pregnant woman. Find a **fertility specialist**, that does nothing else. Ask or find out his batting average.

Don't let your HMO, insurance company, or government health system and their doctors get away with "take this pill and call me next month." They are not interested in getting you pregnant. They are interested in giving you cheap medication (or medication that you will have to pay for) and sending you home. Their number one priority is cost control. *Our HMO wasted thousands of our dollars and two years of our fertility window.*

Read everything you can! Do your own research. Take control of your own diagnosis and treatment. It is a good start that you found this site; keep it up. If you rely completely on the guidance and advice of your medical professionals your odds of success are not good...and if you are eventually successful, it will have cost much more time and money than necessary.

Write down **your story**. It will help you turn your emotional pain into action. It will help you figure out where you are so you can decide what to do next. It will help you communicate with your doctors. If you share it with family and friends, it will help them understand your situation.

Get **diagnosed before** you let doctors spend all your money on fertility drugs and surgery. It makes sense to know what you are trying to treat before you start treating it. *But try to tell that to our first two doctors.*

Take **vitamins**, both of you: A multi-vitamin with extra calcium and iron for the woman and extra zinc for the man.

Don't aggravate your **allergies**! Know your allergies (get tested if you suspect anything).

Sperm does not keep. A man can't "save up" his sperm for use at ovulation. The less you make love, the less (quantity and quality) he will produce. The worst thing you can do is make love only once or twice a month. For best odds, make love frequently and regularly. Certainly, at least, make love whenever you want to.

Don't immerse yourselves (and your marriage) in pain for years on end. Take a periodic break, a vacation from infertility. Like maybe "Every March and August we resolve to not be an infertile couple, just a couple, we won't talk about it, think about it (as much as is possible), won't visit the doctor, etc." Make love (or not) only for love's sake. Give up, at least for a time, before it breaks your marriage. Your marriage is more important than producing biological children. If your marriage is not most important, then what kind of home will the child have? If you are in a feedback loop of infertility begets stress begets infertility begets stress begets infertility...you must make a change.

Online infertility resources

(all addresses start <http://>)

[Adoption: Assistance, Information and Support](http://www.adopting.org/ar.html): At www.adopting.org/ar.html, including infertility.

[Donor Semen Issues](http://www.mindspring.com/~xytex/xytex.html): www.mindspring.com/~xytex/xytex.html.

Family Helper: At www.helping.com, Family Helper site covers infertility support groups, clinics, resources and newsletters. Plus adoption, post-adoption, search and reunion, and genealogy. E-mail: helper@helping.com. [This Web site.]

FeMail: Mail-order pharmacy for women. Discounted prescriptions to women with limited or no insurance coverage. Website www.fe-mail.com. --Matthew Glitzer, President, 1-888-335-2451, femail@bellatlantic.net, 15 Sep 1997

[Ferre Institute](http://members.aol.com/ferreinf/ferre.html), at <http://members.aol.com/ferreinf/ferre.html>. Utica NY; brochures; newsletter; mail-order library.

[Fertilitext Reproductive Health and Fertility Information](http://www.fertilitext.org), www.fertilitext.org; directory of doctors (U.S. only); articles; library; glossary.

[Fertility Detection Page](http://nbbus.nbnet.nb.ca/free/bio.htm): Detecting fertility: nbbus.nbnet.nb.ca/free/bio.htm (The Ovulation Tester).

[Fertility Information Resource List](http://www.vais.net/~travis/firl.html), at www.vais.net/~travis/firl.html. Travis Low, along with his wife Carolyn and baby Tiernan, is a survivor of the infertility wars who accumulated a ton of information along the way. He has organized and published it in friendly form. Good list of infertility books, Web sites and Internet sites. Travis Low (travis@netrix.net), Reston VA, e-mail travis@vais.net.

[Fertility Weekly](http://www.holonet.net/homepage/n_sample.htm), at www.holonet.net/homepage/n_sample.htm. Weekly online journal; expensive to subscribe to; abstracts of latest articles on a sample page.

[Genetics and IVF Institute](http://www.givf.com/): www.givf.com/

[Geodesic Meditech](http://www.geodesic-meditech.com/lifesign_faq.html), at www.geodesic-meditech.com/lifesign_faq.html. California company sells ovulation kits and pregnancy tests.

[Hannah's Prayer](http://www.hannah.org) is a Christian infertility and pregnancy loss support organization, at <http://www.hannah.org>. Jennifer Saake, hannahs@hannah.org. Christian Support for Fertility Challenges, Box 5016, Auburn, CA 95604-5016. (916) 444-4253.

[How to Have a Baby](http://www.mindspring.com/~pkwyfert). At <http://www.mindspring.com/~pkwyfert>. A linked URL is <http://www.mindspring.com/~pkwyfert/sprmdon.htm>, a reference book about the technical aspects of infertility treatment for lay readers. The second URL is an excerpt from a chapter of the book about sperm donation. Beverley T. W. Sherrid, b.sherrid@mindspring.com, Parkway Publications, Inc., 625 The Parkway, Mamaroneck, N.Y. 10543, or pkwyfert@mindspring.com.

INCIID (International Council on Infertility Information Dissemination). INCIID, Box 6836; Arlington, Virginia 22206, 520-544-9548, fax 214-509-5251, e-mail: INCIIDinfo@inciid.org, web: www.inciid.org. Nancy P. Hemenway: nancy@inciid.org. Newsletter: *INCIID Insights*.

Infertility: The Infertility site at **Family Helper**, www.helping.com, covers infertility support groups, clinics and newsletters. E-mail: helper@helping.com. [This Web site.]

Infertility books: www.tapestrybooks.com/catalog/text/d_learn.html

Infertility Network: Site for the infertility support group based in Toronto, at www.helping.com/family/iy/in.html.

Infertility Resources at <http://www.ihr.com/infertility/>. --Cliff Bernstein, cliffb@hooked.net, Oct. 28, 1996.

Infertility-related Legal Issues. By William F. Panak<WPANAK@MARSHALLNET.COM , at www.public.iastate.edu/~wpanak/iic2.html.

Infertility Support and Advocacy. Dave and Tresa Mcgee<MCGEE@EBICOM.NET . At <http://www.ebicom.net/~mcgee/index.shtml>.

ISSUE, The National Fertility Association (UK): www.gpl.net/users/hedgley/

IVF/GIFT/ZIFT Success Rates, 1985 - 1994. By William F. Panak<WPANAK@MARSHALLNET.COM , at www.public.iastate.edu/~wpanak/ivfreg94.html.

Miscarriage -- misc.kids FAQ on miscarriage: scalos.mc.duke.edu/~brook006/miscarriage.html.

Ladies In Waiting. On-line support group for married, Christian women dealing with infertility. At <http://members.aol.com/ladenwaitn/index.html>. Julie Donahue, Box 5304, Modesto CA 95358, LadeNWaitN@aol.com.

MD (pclaman@cyberplus.ca, Director, IVF-ET, Goal Program, Ottawa Civic Hospital, CPC, 5th Floor, 1053 Carling Ave., Ottawa, Ont. K1Y 4E9, 613-761-4100, fax 724-4942. E-mail pclaman@civich.ottawa.on.ca

Ovulation Method. Information for women who want to identify their cycle using the "ovulation method." At <http://upbeat.com/family/om.html>. USA toll-free: 1-800-443-3395.

Pathology Laboratories Handbook, at <http://pathweb.pds.med.umich.edu/handbook/TBLCNTS.htm> has every medical test in alphabetical order, with the normal expected ranges.

Perspectives Press: The Infertility and Adoption Publisher. Web: www.perspectivespress.com. --Pat Johnston, PIJohnston@aol.com, 14 July 1997

Pineland Press, at www.pinelandpress.com/toc.html. FAQ on low-tech treatments for infertility, BBT spreadsheet, list of publications.

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome, at <http://members.aol.com/AngeliqueC/PCOS/PCOS.html>. Lynne-Marie Tirado (SYMBABEAR@aol.com), Box 174, Verbank, NY 12585. Women with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) experience increased body hair, obesity and infertility due to both anovulation (not ovulating) and recurrent miscarriage, plus markedly increased risk of endometrial cancer and cardiovascular disease. The PCOS newsgroup is alt.support.pco. To subscribe to the PCOS mailing list, send an e-mail to: pco-request@lists.best.com and type just the word 'subscribe' in the body of the message. --Mary Clark, mclark@solved.com, Oct. 12, 1997

Resolve National, at www.ihr.com/resolve. 1310 Broadway, Somerville MA 02144-1731, 617-623-0744, fax 617-623-0252. Newsletter, fact sheets, help line, referral services, conferences.

Schraft's Pharmacy, at <http://www.net-lynx.com/>. On infertility. --Adam Hait, RPh, e-mail: manz@net-lynx.com, (201) 373-1651, fax: (201) 373-2664; 8 Mar 1997

Spermatology is located at <http://numbat.murdoch.edu.au/spermatology/spermhp.html> and is produced by Murdoch University, Australia. Jim Cummins (cummins@central.murdoch.edu.au) wrote on April 28, 1996: "This is more geared to comparative and evolutionary studies of sperm function and to professionals in the field."

Tapestry Books: www.webcom.com/~tapestry

Texas Infertility Insurance Advocacy -- Legislation for infertility insurance in Texas, at <http://members.aol.com/txadvocat>. --Ed Gomes, elg56@ix.netcom.com, 6 Sep 1997 **The American Surrogacy Center** (TASC). Surrogacy; monthly e-mail newsletter, TASCFORCE, free at the web site www.surrogacy.com. Joan Barnes (joanb@surrogacy.com). Also at the web site, TASC Classifieds: online advertising for surrogacy.

Toronto Centre for Advanced Reproductive Technology (TCART), at www.tcartonline.com. Brochure; biographies of doctors and price list. E-mail: tcart@hookup.net.

West Essex Center for Advanced Reproductive Endocrinology, at www.angelfire.com/free/wecare.html. Method of sex selection; e-mail: sroseff@ix.netcom.com.

www.ivf.com -- At <http://www.ivf.com.au>; IVF Unit in Sydney, Australia. --Dr David Knight dknight@ivf.com.au, dknight@magna.com.au, 24 Jul 1997

Mailing Lists

When following instructions for subscribing to these mailing lists, do not include the quotation marks.

Endometriosis Mailing List. E-mail to LISTSERV@LISTSERV.DARTMOUTH.EDU and in the body of your message, type "SUBSCRIBE WITSEND0 your name".

Fertility Information Resource List. Send mail to: travis@vais.net and put "Send Resource List" as message subject. By Travis Low of Reston VA.

Fortility. For those involved in infertility who are 40 "or better". Send a message to: fortility-request@columbia.edu with a blank "subject" line. In the message area, type: subscribe. Smaller volume of messages than the ilist.

Infertility Insurance Advice. Send mail to: wpanak@iastate.edu and put "Send Insurance Advice" as message subject.

Infertility Mailing List (ilist). E-mail to majordomo@acpub.duke.edu with a blank Subject: line. The body of the message should contain only the words "subscribe ilist your name". Warning: the volume of messages is sometimes overwhelming.

ONNA: mailing list that has a web site -- www.asan.com/users/phoenix/onna/TOC.htm. E-mail to listserv@listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu; in the body of the message, type *subscribe onna*. FAQ; very high volume; digest version available.

Panfert: For those pregnant after infertility. To get on the Pregnancy After Infertility Mailing List send e-mail to external-majordomo@palladium.corp.sgi.com with subscribe *your address* in the message.

Surrogacy Assistance. IVF Hints -- Send mail to: tabtrotter@aol.com and put "Send IVF Hints" as message subject.

WAC-list (wanting another child) -- Mailing list for people going through secondary infertility. At <http://www.mindspring.com/~jimnb/wac.htm>. For any parent trying to have another child. To join: send an email to wac-list-request@cyberclick.com; put the word "subscribe" (no quotes) in the body of the message. -- *Bridget at blpb@mindspring.com, 30 Jun 1997*

Newsgroups

alt.infertility and *misc.health.infertility*.

Chat rooms

America Online, **Infertility Chat Room.**

America Online, **Donor Egg Chat Room.**

IRC Infertility Chat (undernet) on #infertility.

Infertility Internet Chatsite. At: www.public.iastate.edu/~wpanak/iic.html.