

Fertility

PLANNING FOR PREGNANCY

Planning for pregnancy is a great idea, regardless of fertility, infertility, or the time it takes to get pregnant.

Both women and men should try to optimize their health since many chronic health problems like Diabetes and Hypertension can impact getting pregnant, the pregnancy, and the baby.

Optimal body mass index (BMI) is between 18-25. The medical evidence does show that a BMI above or below the optimal range makes it harder to get pregnant and complicates the pregnancy. Both women and men are encouraged to improve their diets and lifestyles by exercising regularly, reducing caffeine, and stopping alcohol and cigarettes. A daily multivitamin containing Folic acid is recommended even before you start trying to get pregnant.

If you are not sure about your immunity to Rubella or Chicken pox, that can be checked with a blood test. Those vaccines are best given months prior to pregnancy.

Women should avoid raw meat or fish and unpasteurized milk and cheese. Also, this is the time for women to stop handling the cat's litter box.

Prior to pregnancy is also an appropriate time to screen for some inherited genetic disorders. Blood tests can screen for many recessive genetic disorders, but not all.

Optimizing Natural Fertility

Fertile Window: Intercourse is most likely to result in pregnancy within the three-day interval prior to ovulation, and up to seven days prior to ovulation.

Frequency of Intercourse: Intercourse on alternate days, every 2 days, has the same pregnancy rate as intercourse every day. Ideally you would have intercourse approximately every two days for the week prior to ovulation. Your position before and after intercourse does not impact pregnancy rates. Some lubricants may harm sperm but Pre-Seed, mineral oil, or canola oil are safe to use if lubrication is needed during intercourse.

Monitor Ovulation: Cervical mucous that is clear and slippery, similar to raw egg whites, is a good predictor of ovulation. Ovulation predictor kits, urine LH detection kits, can be helpful to predict ovulation and time intercourse.

Other: Avoid smoking, alcohol, and recreational drugs. Pesticides, heavy metals, dry cleaning solvents, and lead may decrease your fertility.

Fertility Evaluation Tests

Some of these tests **may** be recommended during your evaluation and treatment.

Semen Analysis: Examines the number and quality of the sperm

Hormone levels (FSH, Estradiol): A blood test done two days after the menstrual cycle starts to predict the health of a women's ovaries and eggs.

AMH, Anti-Mullerian Hormone: Another blood test that predicts the number of healthy eggs left in the ovaries.

Urinary LH testing: LH testing and ultrasound can predict ovulation. The test is best done every morning during the seven days prior to expected ovulation.

Pelvic Ultrasound: Office procedure to evaluate the uterus and ovaries and monitor ovarian follicles and egg development.

Hysterosalpingogram (HSG): A radiology procedure to evaluate the Fallopian tubes and the uterine lining. This test is done on day 7-10 of a cycle.

Clomid Challenge test: Another blood test to evaluate the eggs or ovarian reserve.

Infertility Treatment Options

The recommended treatment will depend on the test results, infertility diagnosis, women's age and couple's preference. This is a broad overview of what you might expect.

Ovulation Induction: Clomid (clomiphene citrate) and Letrozole are the most commonly used medications for ovulation induction. Both medications work by tricking your body into producing more FSH, follicle stimulating hormone, and that stimulates the ovary to produce 1-3 follicles or eggs. Approximately 20-40% of women will have a successful pregnancy after 3-4 cycles of ovulation induction.

Intrauterine insemination: The sperm specimen is prepared in our office to collect only the active motile sperm and wash away the rest of the semen. A very small catheter is then use to place those sperm directly into the uterine cavity.

In vitro fertilization (IVF): IVF is done by Reproductive Endocrinology specialists. Though IVF is an expensive and difficult process, for some women IVF is the most time and cost effective treatment option.