

Infertility

Arvind Singh^{1*}, Sushila Singh², U.V.S. Teotia¹, Deepak N. Kapoor³

¹Department of Life Sciences, Shri Venkateshwara University, J.P. Nagar (U.P.), India

²Department of Biomedical Sciences, Bundelkhand University, Jhansi, (U.P.), India

³Oniosome Research Centre, Oniosome Healthcare Pvt. Ltd., Mohali -160071 (Punjab), India

*corresponding author: arvindsingh1091@gmail.com

The inability to conceive a pregnancy naturally - is affecting an ever-increasing number of couples. Generally speaking, if a couple has been having regular unprotected sex for a year without getting pregnant, they are considered to be suffering from reduced fertility.

No one is really sure why infertility rates are going up, but doctors suspect that modern lifestyle factors are involved, alongside the fact that more and more women are delaying having a family until their mid-thirties or even older. Being a little older does play a role, certainly, but infertility can affect men and women of any age. In some cases, a couple is affected by male and female factor infertility problems at the same time.

Thankfully, fertility treatment technology has advanced far enough that it's now possible to help many infertile couples to have children.

Female Infertility

The female reproductive system is a complex thing. Any number of "components" can malfunction and give rise to fertility problems. Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) can cause female infertility, as can hormonal imbalances and ovulatory disorders, as well as conditions such as endometriosis, polycystic ovarian syndrome, and uterine fibroids. Being overweight and leading an unhealthy lifestyle are often curable causes of female infertility.

There are many tests available to diagnose female infertility, and advanced treatments for helping infertile women to become mothers. In some cases, female infertility remains unexplained. This is a very frustrating situation to be in, but nevertheless, women who've received a diagnosis of unexplained

infertility have succeeded in having children through fertility treatment.



World health organization

The WHO defines infertility as follows:

Infertility is the inability to conceive a child. A couple may be considered infertile if, after two years of regular sexual intercourse, without contraception, the woman has not become pregnant (and there is no other reason, such as breastfeeding or postpartum amenorrhea). Primary infertility is infertility in a couple who have never had a child. Secondary infertility is failure to conceive following a previous pregnancy. Infertility may be caused by infection in the man or woman, but often there is no obvious underlying cause.



Male Infertility

Male infertility is just as likely as female infertility to be the cause of a couple's fertility issues. There are many tests available to diagnose male infertility, some of which can even be performed at home. Men with sperm production problems (low sperm counts or poor sperm quality) may have difficulty getting their partners pregnant. Certain genetic conditions can also cause a man to be infertile, as do hormonal problems and physical problems in the male reproductive system (for example, blockages in the testes or problems with erectile function).

Just as poor diet can cause female infertility, men who don't eat right, drink too much and smoke may be reducing their own fertility. This infertility cause is often reversible.

Infertility primarily refers to the biological inability of a person to contribute to conception. Infertility may also refer to the state of a woman who is unable to carry a pregnancy to full term. There are many biological causes of infertility, some which may be bypassed with medical

What increases a man's risk of infertility?

A man's sperm can be changed by his overall health and lifestyle. Some things that may reduce the health or number of sperm include:

- Heavy alcohol use
- Drugs
- Smoking cigarettes
- Age
- Environmental toxins, including pesticides and lead
- Health problems such as mumps, serious conditions like kidney disease, or hormone problems
- Medicines
- Radiation treatment and chemotherapy for cancer

What things increase a woman's risk of infertility?

Many things can change a woman's ability to have a baby. These include:

- Age
- Smoking
- Excess alcohol use
- Stress
- Poor diet
- Athletic training
- Being overweight or underweight
- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

- Health problems that cause hormonal changes, such as polycystic ovarian syndrome and primary ovarian insufficiency

Infertility Treatments

The type of treatments recommended to a couple depends on the cause of the infertility (if any is found) and whether the fertility problem is with the man, the woman, or with both of them. In any case, a range of treatments is available. Treatment usually begins with the least invasive methods, and if these don't work, moves on to more invasive methods. Drugs, surgery and artificial reproduction technologies such as IVF (in vitro fertilization) and IUI (intrauterine insemination) are all used to help treat infertile couples. These methods don't always work however - therefore some infertile couples are obliged to consider ways of having a family other than bearing a child themselves.

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