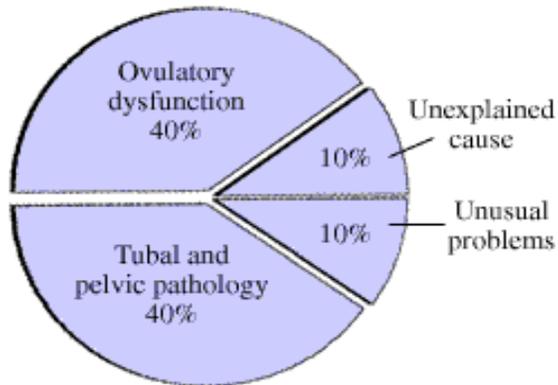
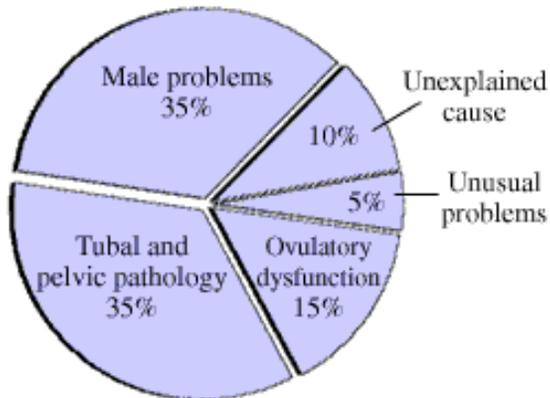


Fertility Problems

Women



Couples



Risk factors you can't control

- Aging. Rates of infertility in women increase with age and are about 7% in women ages 20-24, 9% in women ages 25-29, 15% in women ages 30-34, 22% in women ages 35-39 and 29% in women ages 40-44.
- Problems with the male or female reproductive system that were present at birth.
- Past exposure to high levels of environmental toxins, certain drugs, or high doses of radiation (including cancer chemotherapy or radiation).

- Past infection with a sexually transmitted disease (such as gonorrhea or chlamydia) that has since damaged the reproductive system.

Risk factors you can control

- Polycystic ovary syndrome, which is related to a hormone imbalance that interferes with normal ovulation.
- Tobacco or marijuana use, which reduces sperm counts and female fertility.
- Frequent (daily) or infrequent (10-14 days) ejaculation, either of which can temporarily lower sperm count.
- Exercising intensely for months or years, which may affect a man's sperm count and prevent a woman's ovulation.
- Drinking more than 2-4 alcoholic beverages daily for several months, which can cause injury to sperm.
- Prior surgical sterilization, such as vasectomy or tubal ligation.

When to call a doctor

- Want to have children but are unable to become pregnant after 1 year of having sex without birth control.
- Are a woman older than 35 who has been unable to become pregnant after 6 months of trying without birth control.
- Have had three or more miscarriages in a row.

What to do When you Can't Conceive



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www.hbfamilyandsupport.ca

24 Hour Crisis Line
(North East Region)
1-800-611-6349

If You Can't Get Pregnant...

If you are a woman who spent your life imagining what it would be like to have a child, then you know how exciting it is when you finally decide that you are ready to make that leap. You are finally prepared to put yourself second. You are willing to make a child the number one priority in life. You are ready to get pregnant.

If you are a woman who has tried and tried and who has been unable to conceive, then you also know the veritable barrage of emotions that you encounter – grief, embarrassment, uselessness.

You may have fertility problems if you have not been able to get pregnant after trying for 1 year. Another word for this is infertility.

Infertility doesn't mean that it's impossible to get pregnant. Often, couples conceive without help in their second year of trying. However, medical treatment may help some couples.

Age is an important factor if you are trying to decide whether to get treatment and testing for fertility problems. A woman is most fertile in her late 20's. After age 35, fertility decreases and the risk of miscarriage goes up.

- If you are younger than 35, you may want to give yourself more time to get pregnant.
- If you are 35 or older, you may want to get help soon.

What causes fertility problems?

Fertility problems can have many problems. In cases of infertility:

- About 50 out of 100 are caused by a problem with the women's reproductive system. These may be problems with her fallopian tubes or uterus or her ability to release an egg (ovulate).
- About 35 out of 100 are caused by the male's reproductive system. The most common is low sperm count.
- About 5 out of 100 are caused by an uncommon problem, such as the man or woman having been exposed to a medicine called DES before birth.
- In about 10 out of 100, no cause can be found in spite of testing.

Options

- Fertility drugs – Drugs such as clomifene (pill form) and human menopausal gonadotrophin (hMG) (injection form) regulate reproductive hormones and trigger the release of more eggs per cycle. The percentages of woman who get pregnant are 15%-50% of clomid and 7%-14% for hMG.
- Intrauterine insemination (IUI) – A concentrated dose of sperm is injected into the uterus or fallopian tubes with a catheter. About 15% of pregnancies happen with IUI.
- In vitro fertilization (IVF) – Eggs removed from the ovaries are fertilized with sperm in a laboratory, and the resulting embryos are transplanted back into the uterus. About 25% - 40% of

happen using IVF, depending on the age of the woman.

- Gamete intrafallopian transfer (GIFT) – Eggs and sperm are harvested and mixed together in a lab. This mixture is surgically injected into the fallopian tubes so fertilization can happen naturally inside the body. About 25%-30% of pregnancies happen from GIFT.
- Intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI) – a single sperm is injected into a single egg and the resulting embryo is transplanted into the uterus. About 29% of pregnancies happen from ICSI if the woman is under 35 years of age.
- Donor sperm – A donor sperm is used instead of the partner's. Pregnancies happen about 5%-14% of the time.
- Egg donation – An egg donated by another woman is mixed with sperm and implanted in the woman's uterus. Pregnancies happen about 25%-40% of the time.
- Surrogacy – Another woman carries a couple's embryo, or a donor embryo, to term. Too many elements that affect the success rate to give a percentage.
- Surgery – Unblocking the fallopian tubes, removing endometrial scarring and ovarian cysts can increase your chance of conception. The pregnancy percentage depends on the problem and its severity.
- Adoption – Another option is adoption. If none of the above work out you can adopt a child from an adoption agency. The percentage rate isn't available.