

# Infertility

“Fertility” means being able to have children. Sometimes couples want children but can’t get pregnant. This is called “infertility.” If you don’t get pregnant after having sex without birth control for one year, talk to your doctor or nurse.

## When is the best time to have sex if you are trying to get pregnant?

- A couple should have sex at the right time of the month. Ovulation is when the woman’s egg drops to a place in her body where the sperm can reach it. This is the time when a woman can get pregnant. Couples should have sex a few times during the days around this time.

## What should I do if I don’t get pregnant within a year?

- You should see a doctor if you do not get pregnant after a year of having sex without using birth control. In some cases, you may need to get help even before a year is up.

## At what age does it get harder to get pregnant?

- It is harder to get pregnant for women who are age 30 or older. A woman’s chance of getting pregnant takes a big drop around age 40. You may not want to wait

a whole year to see a doctor if you are over 30. You may want to get tested sooner.

## Do men lose their fertility at the same age as women?

- Men don’t make as much sperm after age 25 as younger men do. Some men keep making lots of sperm into their 60s and 70s.

## Can men have infertility? Yes.

- Men can be infertile too. For example, a man may make no sperm or too few sperm.

## What affects a man’s sperm?

- Men need to get enough rest and eat healthy food to make enough sperm. Men who are under a lot of stress might not make healthy sperm.
- Alcohol and drugs can also hurt a man’s sperm. Marijuana (pot), cigarettes, and some medicines can affect sperm.
- Chemicals, like lead or bug killer can affect a man’s sperm.
- Men who want to have a child should not wear tight underwear. They should not use hot tubs or saunas. All of these things may lessen the number of healthy sperm.



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## Are there tests to check fertility?

### Yes.

- A doctor can look at a man's sperm under a microscope to see how many sperm he has and how healthy they are.
- A home test can find out if a woman is ovulating every month. The FDA approves these tests.

## A couple should go to a doctor or clinic if:

- The woman isn't having regular periods. This could mean that she is not ovulating.
- The woman has lost a baby (miscarriage) three or more times.
- The man has had three or more miscarriages with another partner.
- The woman has had pelvic infections or the man has had mumps or a prostate infection.
- The woman or man did not get pregnant with another partner.

## Treatment

- Many cases can be treated with drugs or surgery.
- There are many ways to put the sperm and egg together and then put it back into the woman's womb.

**FDA Office of Women's Health** <http://www.fda.gov/womens>

## To Learn More:

### Food and Drug Administration (FDA)

[http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/1997/197\\_fert.html](http://www.fda.gov/fdac/features/1997/197_fert.html)