

# **Freezing Fertility ..... a choice every women has!!!!**

Today, women pursue careers and marry late and even when they marry, they postpone having children till they have settled in their careers or settled financially. It is heartening to see women zooming ahead full blast in their careers, totally focused on their future!

Unfortunately many women do not know that as they age, fertility drops. Scientific research has shown that the chances of conceiving and having a baby are the best between the ages of 20 to 30 years. Those are the years when the best quality eggs are released from a woman's ovaries. As women we must appreciate that we are born with a limited number of eggs, which almost disappear by the time we reach menopause. Every month, after we reach puberty, about 20-25 eggs start growing, but only one gets dominant, mature and is released. This is the best of the cohort and helps us to have a pregnancy, whilst the other withers away. And during the last 10 years before menopause, the eggs which are released are the worst of the lot which we possess – they are not the best quality and only some of them qualify to get fertilized by sperms leading to the creation of embryos, our future babies! Yet these embryos are quite often abnormal leading to higher chances of abnormalities in babies as we go beyond the age of 40 years.

In the past, women got married at the age of 16 to 18 years, had babies every other year and had completed their families by the age of 25 years to 26 years! Hence sexual activity happened legally within the most fertile period of their lives leading to a very fertile Indian population without having any fertility issues. The commonest fertility issues which occurred those days were due to infections like tuberculosis or sexually transmitted infections which blocked tubes and caused infertility.

Today the scene is totally different! We have great drugs to prevent and treat infections; a wonderful menu of investigations which can be done to detect problems, yet infertility has increased! This is mainly because women are now planning babies beyond 30! There may be many situations when women have not found their right partners, or women are not in a position to have babies due to various reasons. They are stressed that when they do finally find their partners or when they are ready to have babies, then their ticking biological clock may have stopped ticking!

Today, there is a great opportunity for such women to freeze their fertility. Science has advanced and women can now freeze their eggs at a younger age, so that when they utilize these young eggs even 10 years later, they create healthy embryos and healthy children. We have various situations to day when women have frozen their fertility- young women who are undergoing treatment for cancer (because cancer therapy can destroy these eggs permanently), women who are not yet married by the age of 35 years, women who have domestic or financial issues, which do not allow them to have a baby in their younger years, or women with medical disorders which do not allow them to have a pregnancy as pregnancy would put their lives at risk.

It is wonderful news for women that they are now able to relax and not get stressed as the years go by. Freezing fertility has become a standard of care in any established IVF center today.

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