

## Treating Infertility



The lifelong dream of having a family and giving birth does not always occur as easily as we would anticipate. Nearly 5 million American couples will have difficulty achieving a live birth and 1.3 million couples will receive medical advice or treatment for this problem. Treatment for infertility has brought new hope for couples over the last 20 years, along with new challenges for health care professionals involved in reproductive medicine.

The basic principle behind successful reproduction is the development of a mature egg and sperm and their ability to meet in a timely fashion thus allowing fertilization to take place. Once the fertilization has taken place, a series of orderly events happens that successfully transports the embryo to the receptive uterus. This ultimately results in implantation, pregnancy, and delivery. With such intricate steps involved in the reproductive function, you can see how impairment at one or many different levels, can result in the inability of a couple to conceive. Correcting any abnormality, whether structural or functional, is the responsibility of the health care team working with the infertile couple. This correction may significantly enhance and contribute to the success of many couples trying to have a family.

It is human nature to worry and wonder about our conceptual effort and outcome before they happen. Many couples are simply not aware of their health status prior to conception; it can be as important or more important than that which takes place after pregnancy.

We address many factors; maternal age, smoking, alcohol, drugs, occupation, environmental factors, infectious diseases, nutrition, and a complete hormone work-up prior to trying for pregnancy. Many times it is the hormone alone that keeps the couple from getting pregnant.

The bottom line is we are here for you and will do everything we can to assure you and provide care and treatment in your quest for a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby.

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— *Trudy Carter, RN, Endocrine Nurse*