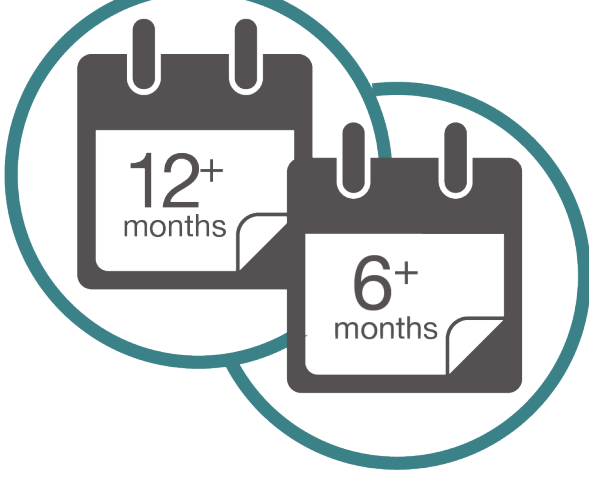


UNDERSTANDING Infertility

What is infertility?

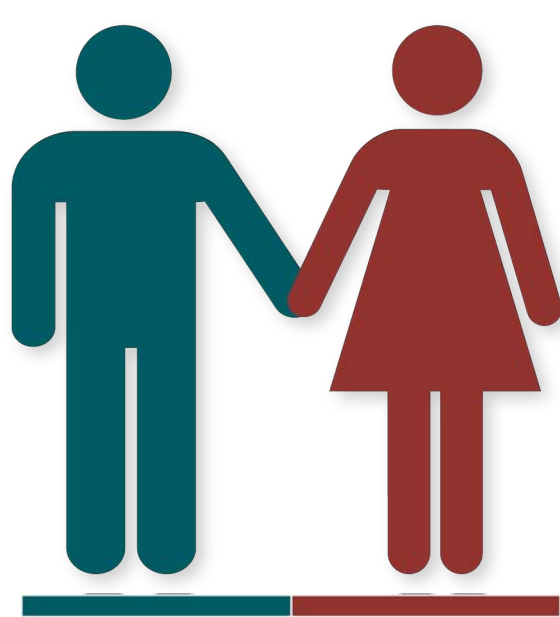


Infertility is the inability to achieve pregnancy after **12 months or more** of regular, unprotected sexual intercourse (or after **6 months if the woman is older than 35**). The term describes men who can't get a woman pregnant and women who can't get pregnant or carry a pregnancy to term.

About **9%** of men and about **11%** of women of reproductive age in the United States have experienced fertility problems.



Many couples experience infertility. The causes can be from factors in the female, factors in the male, or a combination of factors from both the female and the male.



What types of things can cause or contribute to infertility?

Health conditions and behaviors, age, genetics, and other factors can all cause or contribute to infertility in men and women.

Health Conditions and Behaviors

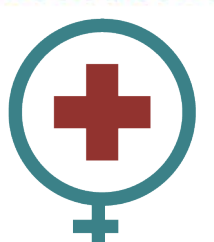


Men

- ▶ Certain medications, such as testosterone gels/patches to treat "low T"
- ▶ Testicular injury or overheating

Men and Women

- ▶ Exposure to chemicals
- ▶ Cancer and/or exposure to radiation or chemotherapy
- ▶ Stress
- ▶ Conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, obesity, high blood pressure, and autoimmune disorders
- ▶ Smoking and/or alcohol and drug abuse
- ▶ Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)



Women

- ▶ Gynecological disorders such as polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), primary ovarian insufficiency (POI), endometriosis, and uterine fibroids
- ▶ Problems with anatomy of the reproductive organs

What's age got to do with it?



People are waiting longer than ever before to start families. In fact, about **20% of women** in the United States now have their first child **after age 35**.

As age increases, so does the likelihood of infertility.

- ▶ Older men produce fewer sperm and lower-quality sperm.
- ▶ Older women have fewer eggs and lower-quality eggs.
- ▶ The risk of some health conditions associated with infertility (above) increases with age.
- ▶ Age-related declines in sperm and egg quality increase the risk of health conditions, such as Down syndrome, autism, and schizophrenia, in future generations.



After age 30, a woman's fertility decreases rapidly every year until menopause, usually around age 50. In the decade before menopause, her fertility is also greatly reduced. Male fertility also declines with age, but more gradually.

What now?

Get informed! Learn the risk factors for infertility, and ask your healthcare provider any questions you have about your ability to conceive and the natural course of fertility through your lifespan.



Make a plan!

It's never too early to start. Talk to your healthcare provider now about how to improve your overall health and eliminate risk factors so that your body is ready to conceive when you are.

Chandra, A., Copen, C.E., & Stephen, E.H. (2013). Infertility and Impaired Fecundity in the United States, 1982-2010.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2019). Infertility FAQs.