

**INFERTILITY** is defined as the inability to conceive after one year of unprotected intercourse. It can affect as many as 15% to 20% of couples. Although diagnosis and treatment for infertility may be necessary in order to conceive, there are a number of active steps a couple can take to significantly improve their chances of success, either on their own or with medical treatment.

**1** Throw away the thermometer and the ovulation predictors kits. Both of these methods to predict ovulation are neither sensitive nor specific. They can predict ovulation in women who aren't and miss ovulation in women who do. They can also put undue stress on a couple to perform. Instead, we recommend that a couple make love every other day between Day 10-20, as long as the woman has monthly cycles.

**2** Don't have intercourse daily for more than two days. A man's sperm count can be significantly depleted. Since sperm will live in a woman's reproductive tract for 48 hours, you can afford to take the day off to allow the man's sperm to regenerate.

**3** Watch out for lubricants. Although most lubricants do not kill sperm (spermicidal), most are spermastatic. They paralyze sperm. There are a few sperm friendly lubricants. Talk to your pharmacist for the correct choice.

**4** Don't wait a full year to see your MD if you think you may not be ovulating. A woman is likely

drop in sperm count. Progesterone cream used to lessen heavy periods in women can also inhibit ovulation. In addition, herbal and naturopathic supplements can have hormonal properties that can interfere with ovulation. If there's a concern, ask your doctor.

## 10 TIPS TO IMPROVE *your* FERTILITY

Ken Cadesky MD, Medical Director, LifeQuest Centre for Reproductive Medicine

ovulating regularly if her cycles are between 25-35 days on a regular basis. If they vary far off from this range, medication may be required to allow regular ovulation to occur and there is no point in delaying.

**5** Stop smoking. There are reports that even a single cigarette per week in both men and women can decrease fertility by as much as eight times. If both partners smoke, it's doubly compounded.

**6** Be aware of the significance of a woman's age and fertility. A woman is born with all of her eggs. She depletes this stock throughout her reproductive years. There is an exponential decrease in fertility after age 38. An 18 year old woman has a monthly natural fertility rate of about 25%. A 40 year old woman's is between 4% to 8% monthly. Don't assume fertility lasts forever; it isn't a switch that can be turned on and off.

**7** Medications/supplements can affect fertility. For example, men who are taking propecia for hair loss, or testosterone to increase libido, can experience a significant

drop in sperm count. Progesterone cream used to lessen heavy periods in women can also inhibit ovulation. In addition, herbal and naturopathic supplements can have hormonal properties that can interfere with ovulation. If there's a concern, ask your doctor.

**8** Infertility is not just a female problem. Up to

50% of the time, there is a male factor as well. Make sure male partners are involved in the process from the very beginning.

**9** Watch out for Internet advice. Although the Internet can be a tremendous resource for information, remember it's unedited and anyone can claim a tremendously successful therapy without proof. If it sounds to be to good to be true, it likely is.

**10** Some types of fertility therapy can be expensive. On the contrary, the majority of appointments, tests and treatments are covered by OHIP. In fact many times, couples conceive without complicated treatment. Proper counselling, lifestyle changes and a few pointers may be all that's necessary.

**For answers to your individual situation, or for more information, please talk to your LifeQuest physician.**

# Trying to Become Parents – the Link to Your Own Parents

Sherry Dale, MSW, LifeQuest Counsellor

People experiencing infertility are sometimes surprised to find issues related to their relationships with their own parents echo back or intensify.

If you had a good relationship with your own parents, part of wanting to have your own family may be the wish to carry that loving connection on to your own children in a smoothly continuous family line. If your relationship with one or both parents was problematic, having a baby can allow you to be a part of a healthy parent-child relationship, which can in turn help you heal from your childhood parental issues.

Having a family of one's own is an important step in "coming of age." It can mark the transition from being your parents' child to being an adult. When infertility makes the hoped-for baby elusive, some people feel trapped in a child-like dynamic with their own parents or in-laws.

You may go through fertility

treatments or adoption proceedings while your own parents falter and become unwell. The prospect of your parent dying before they get a chance to see their grandchild can put an added pressure on you. If your parents are well, you may feel internal or external expectations to give them a much-desired grandchild.

If your parent has died, it's not uncommon to "regrieve" the loss as you try to have a child. You may feel very sad that your mother or father cannot know that they have a

grandchild, and that your child

will never know their grandparent. Once your child has been born or adopted, you may miss the emotional and practical support your parent would have provided to you.

Issues related to your own parents can add to the emotional impact of your infertility experience.

Counselling can help you navigate this often-difficult emotional terrain. ♦

**“Issues related to your own parents can add to the emotional impact of your infertility experience.”**

## Join IAAC

**Infertility Awareness Association of Canada**

**and Get Your Free Copy of Creating Families Journal**

Formerly known as The IAAC Journal, *Creating Families* is IAAC's newest publication that deals exclusively with issues relating to reproductive health. IAAC is all about increasing awareness and understanding of infertility, not only for couples and families directly involved, but also for the general community. *Creating Families Journal* is a must-read.

To find out more about IAAC, or to get a copy of the publication, visit: [www.iaac.ca](http://www.iaac.ca)

## LifeQuest Renovates to Create Additional Comfort, More Privacy

LifeQuest has completed a renovation of its pre-and post-operative waiting area to create more privacy and comfort for patients going through IVF procedures such as ovum retrievals and embryo transfers, and for male patients having sperm aspirations. "The space provides an opportunity for partners to be together during their recovery," said Jocelyn Smith, Senior Administrator. LifeQuest has also created individual workstations for each of its nurses, enhancing their work environment. ♦

**To learn more about LifeQuest and infertility treatment, please visit our website: [www.itstime.ca](http://www.itstime.ca)**



**QUEST**

Centre for Reproductive Medicine

**When it's time, we're here.**

### LifeQuest Centre Downtown Toronto

655 Bay Street, 18th floor  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5G 2K4  
Tel: 416-506-0804 • Fax: 416-506-0600  
Toll Free: 1-866-543-3046  
Email: [info@itstime.ca](mailto:info@itstime.ca)  
[www.itstime.ca](http://www.itstime.ca)

### LifeQuest Centre Thornhill Clinic

7330 Yonge Street, Suite 218  
Thornhill, Ontario, Canada L4J 7Y7  
Tel: 905-731-5928 • Fax: 905-731-4563  
Toll Free: 1-866-543-3046  
Email: [info@itstime.ca](mailto:info@itstime.ca)  
[www.itstime.ca](http://www.itstime.ca)