

# INFERTILITY

— What does it mean?



衛生署

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# INFERTILITY

## — What does it mean?

Becoming pregnant is such a complex process that there is a much greater probability of not becoming pregnant during a menstrual cycle than becoming pregnant.

Even for fertile couple having regular unprotected intercourse, i.e. two or three times a week without any form of birth control, the chance of the wife becoming pregnant within one menstrual cycle is not more than 25%.

### How can we know we are infertile?

**When the couple have regular sexual activity without any contraception for 12 months, and yet the wife is unable to get pregnant, the couple are diagnosed as infertile.**

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### Is it a common problem or a rare problem?

Infertility is a common condition, **affecting 1 in every 6 couples**. The infertility rate increases with female age particularly in women in their forties.

### Can more frequent sexual intercourse help to increase chance of pregnancy?

Too frequent sexual intercourse, say every night, will only lead to decrease in the number of sperms in the semen. On the other hand, too infrequent sexual intercourse, say once every month, will lead to immotile sperms in the semen. Both conditions decrease the chance of pregnancy. More regular intercourse around the time of ovulation help to increase the chance of pregnancy. (Please refer to the leaflet "Infertility – Which tests are necessary?")



Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec

## A year has gone by....

Based on statistical observation, 80-90 out of 100 couples will normally have conceived by this time. Although some of the remaining couples will conceive in a later time, most couples in this group have specific problem.

That means, after 1 year of normal sex life without contraception, from a statistical point of view, the chance of pregnancy is decreasing. It is important to seek help quickly, because the earlier the problem is identified, the better the chance for successful treatment.

## Couples with the followings should consider earlier medical consultation if:

### ● **Wives age at late thirties**

- Three or more miscarriages
- Long and irregular menstrual cycle
- Menstrual cycle of three weeks' interval or less
- Pain during menstruation or sexual intercourse
- History of endometriosis
- History of pelvic infection
- History of pelvic or ovarian operation

### ● **Husbands had mumps in childhood**

- Erectile or ejaculatory problem
- History of prostate infection
- History of undescended testis



## The responsibility of couple

Problems leading to infertility do not only occur in women. Female infertility accounts for about 40% of cases. But in another 30% of cases, the problems actually come from the man. For the remaining, it is either a joint problem or the cause is unknown (unexplained infertility). So the couple should be involved in the process of evaluation.

“ If a specific problem is causing infertility, the sooner it is identified, the sooner you can begin treatment to bring you and your partner closer to achieving your goal.

Treatment success rate decreases with increasing female age. Even with the use of advanced assisted reproductive technologies, the success rate for women aged over 45 is more or less equal to **ZERO**.

**Do not delay seeking professional help!**

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