

Stress Does Impact Your Fertility... But How?

by Joanne Verkuilen - Tuesday, April 04, 2017

<https://natural-fertility-prescription.com/stress-impact-fertility/>

Is there a connection between stress and infertility? Stress is pretty unavoidable these days. There are constant demands on our time and energy -- not to mention expectations from family, work, community (and ourselves!). It can feel like a constant juggling act that's exhausting and overwhelming. No one is immune - everyone feels stress to some degree. The biggest question is how we're managing it.

How we manage stress is so critically important - especially for couples who are struggling with infertility - because in recent years, scientific studies have shown that [sustained high levels of stress can have direct, negative impacts on our physical and mental health](#).

Everything truly is connected: stress, our emotional and mental state, our physical health, and our [fertility](#).

Add the emotional turmoil of infertility to our constant state of "everyday stress", and the impact is significant. Women who are experiencing difficulty getting pregnant can experience [similar levels of depression and anxiety as those suffering from a life-threatening disease like cancer or heart disease](#).

Stress negatively impacts fertility. And unfortunately, stress is compounded when we try to conceive month after month, creating a downward spiral that is difficult to break.

How Does Stress Affect Infertility?

Telling a woman who is having difficulty getting pregnant to "just relax" is a painful suggestion. Not only does it imply that her infertility is somehow her fault, but it is also an overly-simplified view of the physical and psychological influences on the human reproductive system.

[It is rarely as simple as "just relax"](#). However, addressing the causes and management of stress can often help improve fertility. This has been supported by several medical studies that found that stress and the hormones that help regulate our body's response to stress play a significant role in fertility.

Several of these studies talk about stress and infertility

The Stress Hormone Cortisol Affects Ovulation

Emory University's Dr. Sarah Berga has noted that our brain's hypothalamus (a walnut-sized area of our forebrain) handles the functioning of our reproductive system. It also regulates stress by emitting cortisol as needed to keep our bodies in balance. It manages a delicate interplay of hormones. [Dr. Berga's research](#) has found that stress often leads to reduced levels of two hormones needed for ovulation. Her 2006 study found that women who didn't ovulate had excessive cortisol levels in their brain fluid. An earlier study also found that the majority of women who underwent cognitive behavioral therapy saw

their ovulation restored.

The Benefits of Relaxation Training for Pregnancy

[A study conducted by Harvard Medical School](#) on 184 women going through relaxation training for infertility: 55% had a viable pregnancy within one year, compared to only 20% of the control group achieving a viable pregnancy.

Anxiety Delays Conception

[In a study with women undergoing donor sperm insemination](#), those with higher levels of anxiety prior to undergoing inseminations took significantly longer to conceive).

Stress and Depression Significantly Reduce IVF Conception Rate

Women who were not stressed and/or depressed before starting IVF treatment [had a conception rate twice as high](#) as women who were stressed and/or depressed before treatment.

While “just relax” is hardly ever the complete answer to solve infertility, addressing both the source of stress and the way stress is handled in the body can help.

One way to help relieve the combined stresses from normal life **and the added stress of trying to get pregnant** is to use guided visualization and meditation. These methods can help you to take time for yourself every day to deeply relax and help reset your body’s hormones.

Our friends at Circle + Bloom provide several medically-based visualization exercises specifically created to help with infertility that sync to your monthly reproductive cycle. Click here to find out more about Circle + Bloom’s [fertility visualization and meditation programs](#), and [the science behind how they work](#).

Right now, Circle+Bloom is giving a **20% discount** on all of their fertility programs just for readers of Fertility Coach! Please enter coupon **FertilityCoach20** at [Circle+Bloom checkout](#).