

## Stress - The Biggest Culprit of Infertility.



The commonest conception advice now a day: "Just relax and it'll happen". It wonders you does stress really plays a role in conception. The answer is: Recent researches seem to confirm a strong relationship in between stress and infertility.

Many researchers<sup>[1-3]</sup> have proved that stress and infertility forms a vicious cycle. Most of the people who cannot conceive actually have a reasonable cause behind it. But as month after month goes by, feelings of stress, anxiety, and depression often kick in. So even if the physical cause of infertility is treated medically, it's possible that high levels of stress can still make getting pregnant more difficult. Both the partners are affected equally due to stress, thus increasing the intensity of the infertility.

The region of the brain which is affected by stress is the hypothalamus which is responsible for the production of hormones which controls the formation and release of eggs in each menstrual cycle. Thus it can lead to anovulatory cycles. It sometimes, delays the ovulation thus decreasing the chances of conception. In males, the same organ controls the production of testosterone hormone. Thus it is thought that, stress induced abnormality in semen is possible but still it is under research.<sup>[4]</sup>

The cervical mucus is a good indicator of stress induced delay in ovulation. If patches of wetness are seen, rather than the increased cervical wetness then it indicates that your body is trying to ovulate but the stress continues to delay it.<sup>[3]</sup>

Beyond ovulation, other research indicates that stress may have an impact on fertilization and implantation in the uterus also. A study conducted in the University of California San Diego found that the most stressed women undergoing IVF had less success rate. Fewer eggs were retrieved and success rate of implantation was less.<sup>[5]</sup> Another very interesting study was conducted by Israeli researchers in which they de-stress the women while undergoing IVF could impact the success rate. They found that women who were entertained by a clown after they received the treatment were more likely to conceive than those who were not.<sup>[2]</sup>

If the stress is caused by the couple being too busy, and thus they don't have time to have sex during biological prime times, no pregnancy will result, even if everything else was just right.

Change in life style can make you feel more relaxed. Eating healthily, exercising and yoga or meditation can all help to reduce stress. Or maybe you need some time away with your partner to help you conceive. Anything that helps you relax like catching up your hobbies, meeting your best friends and shopping, is certainly a step in the right direction. In the longer term, you may find cognitive behaviour therapy helps to ease your stressful lifestyle. Ask your doctor if she can refer you for this type of talking treatment.<sup>[6]</sup>

If ways to relax don't appear to be helping your cycle, it may be time to seek help. Ask your doctor to refer you to fertility specialist. But remember, that any type of stress or anxiety will take you few steps away from your target.

### REFERENCES

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