



The Wellness Family

Dr. Heather Keeps You Informed

Fertility and Chiropractic

Many couples decide not to have children and go on to have a purposeful and fulfilling life, for other couples the idea of not being parents is devastating. That may be why fertility is a billion-dollar business in the United States alone, but perhaps there's an alternative.

Current Infertility Statistics

Recent statistics show that 1 in 8 couples, or 12% of married women, have trouble getting pregnant or sustaining a pregnancy. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), worldwide infertility rates have remained unchanged for 20 years.

In 2010, it was determined that 48.5 million couples worldwide have been unable to have a child. They also determined that 1.9% of women aged 20-44 who wanted a child were unable to have their first live birth and 10.5% of women who had previously given birth were unable to have another baby after five years of trying. When considering these numbers, it's understandable why couples are spending between \$12,000 and \$15,000 for in-vitro fertilization. Even for couples with insurance that covers fertility treatments, the average out of pocket cost is \$5,000.

Other treatments, such as hormone therapy, can be equally costly and over \$2 billion dollars are being spent annually in the United States for various fertility treatments.

Causes of Infertility

According to the Mayo Clinic, there are several reasons why a couple cannot conceive, and typically a third of the time it is male infertility. For instance, abnormal sperm production or function, problems with the delivery of the sperm, overexposure to certain environmental factors or damage to the male sex organs due to cancer or its treatment.

Another estimated third of cases are caused by an issue with the female. These causes can include ovulation disorders, uterine or cervical abnormalities, fallopian tube damage or blockage, endometriosis, primary ovarian insufficiency (early menopause) or pelvic adhesions. Additional causes may be cancer and its treatment or other medical conditions that are typically a symptom of delayed puberty or absence of menstruation, conditions such as celiac disease, poorly controlled diabetes and some autoimmune diseases such as lupus. Genetic abnormalities may also be a contributing factor.

The final third of infertility cases are issues with both the male and the female or when no official cause can be determined.

Common Allopathic Treatments

In the past 35 years, in-vitro fertilization has become the standard in fertility treatments with over 5 million babies being conceived, according to a very glowing article from the Guardian. What they don't talk about is the millions spent on failed procedures.

Other common answers to infertility include intracytoplasmic sperm injection, donor eggs, surrogacy or donor embryos. Then there are the fertility drugs, ovulation drug therapy, such as Clomid or Serophene which are estrogen-blocking drugs, Femara, injectable



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gonadotropins, the GnRH (gonadotropin-releasing hormone) pump and bromocriptine. The purpose of these drugs is to encourage the body to ovulate.

The Problems with These Treatments

As with all drug therapy options, there are typically horrible side-effects, inconclusive results and ironic twists. For instance, Clomid, apparently the most commonly prescribed hormone treatment, has a 60-80% ovulation rate and about half of those will be able to get pregnant. However, the side-effects are hot flashes, blurred vision, nausea, bloating and headaches. Ironically, Clomid can cause changes in cervical mucus, which may stop sperm from getting to the uterus. How's that for a twist? The drug that is supposed to help with ovulation may stop the sperm from reaching the egg. Unfortunately, the medical management of conception issues will almost always include drug therapy or some invasive procedure.

In a study published by Dr. Leslie Bedell, he writes, "The use of synthetic hormones to both prevent and promote fertility has been shown to have severe and well documented toxic side effects for women. About 10 million women in the USA use the pill at any one time but from 3-50% stop using it within a year because of undesirable side effects. About 120 risks and side effects are associated with this combination (estrogen and synthetic progesterin) some of which are life threatening, including not just heart problems but cancers of the

reproductive organs, breast cancer, increased risk of diabetes, asthma, thyroid imbalance, and immune dysfunction." In other words, the risks of the treatments are high, and the results are not certain.

Biomechanical Causes of Infertility

To better understand how chiropractic care may influence fertility, consider just how many different bodily systems, mechanisms and muscles, joints, etc. are involved in the reproductive cycle of both men and women.

The central nervous system is made up of the brain, spinal cord and the nerves that go out to the muscles, organs and glands. A misalignment in the spine may cause nerve interference which in turn may affect the processing of messages from the brain to those muscles, organs and glands. As such, a properly aligned spine is vital to a properly functioning nervous system and, because the nervous system controls all bodily systems, it plays a significant role in fertility.

A misalignment in the pelvis or sacrum may affect uterine tilt, and a subluxation of the lumbar spine may interfere with ovarian or fallopian tube function. This is just the beginning. Hormonal balance is maintained by the endocrine system, and a problem with the central nervous system will affect this.

As for male fertility issues, the results are similar. Nerve interference or subluxations potentially affect the production and delivery of sperm. Any dysfunction of the nervous system may influence the reproductive system.

Is Chiropractic the Answer?

Dr. Madeline Behrendt, who has dedicated her career to educating the populace on the benefits of chiropractic care for fertility issues, authored an infertility series published in 2004. The purpose of the study was to share anecdotal evidence of Chiropractic helping patients with their fertility.

Dr. Behrendt states unequivocally that Chiropractic in and of itself is not a "cure" or a treatment for infertility. However, what it does is correct distortions in parts of the body where the reproductive organs are located, and this can sometimes have a positive effect on fertility issues.

For instance, a quick Google search of "Chiropractic and infertility" brought up a story shared in a forum for women struggling with infertility. The delightful title was: "Chiropractor Got Me Pregnant!" The post was written by a woman that had one healthy son but was trying to conceive for 2 ½ years (her son was almost 5). At a family Christmas gathering she expressed her frustration in not being able to get pregnant and her husband's cousin, a Chiropractor, told her to come by his office. In 4 weeks, she was pregnant. Did he cure her infertility? No, he didn't, but he did notice her pelvis tilt and adjusted her spine accordingly. Her body did the rest.

Hers is just one of many, many success stories available on the internet: some written by the patient and others submitted as case studies of chiropractic and infertility. A great source for more examples is www.chiro.org/reasaerch/ABSTRACTS/Infertility.shtml.

The Chiropractic Factor

Your Family Wellness Chiropractor is dedicated to ensuring that your spine is aligned correctly, and your body is functioning properly. When operating at its best, your body was created to do everything naturally and without medical interference (pharmaceuticals or invasive procedures).

While Chiropractic Care is not the cure for infertility, a properly functioning reproductive system is rarely infertile.



Dear Patient,

Dr. Heather is dedicated to providing you with the absolute best in family wellness care. So take a moment today to discuss with your Family Wellness Chiropractor any concerns you may have regarding your family's overall health and wellness.

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