

# Natural Help 4...

## Female Infertility



### What is Female Infertility?

Infertility is a condition defined as **not being able to become pregnant** after at least one year of unprotected, regular, well-timed intercourse. Women who suffer from multiple miscarriages may also be **diagnosed as infertile**. Infertility may be classified into two groups, **primary and secondary infertility**.

**Primary infertility** means that you and partner have never had a child. **Secondary infertility** means that the infertile person has had one or more children in the past, but a medical, emotional or physical condition is now hampering fertility.

Many women may be infertile during their **reproductive years** but be completely unaware of this. Factors such as age, lifestyle and physical condition contribute considerably to fertility problems.

Your **chance of getting pregnant** is only, on average, one percent, on any given occasion! However, this varies from woman to woman with some falling pregnant more easily than others. It also varies according to when sex takes place in the **woman's menstrual cycle**.

**Some times of the month are more favorable to conception than others.** Statistically speaking, it has been estimated that approximately one in seven couples in the United States are infertile. Conception can be quite confusing to understand.

**In order to become pregnant**, a woman must release an egg from one of her ovaries. This egg must enter the fallopian tube and head towards the uterus. The sperm must then penetrate and fertilize the egg along the way. The fertilized egg must attach to the inside of the uterus so that implantation can occur. Any interference that occurs during this **fertilization process** may bring about infertility.

**Experiencing infertility** is emotionally painful for women. Feelings of frustration, guilt, anger, anxiety, depression and confusion may dominate your daily life. For this reason, it is important that you together with your partner **find ways to cope with the ups and downs of infertility**.

### Diagnosing Female Infertility

The **diagnosis of infertility in women** is based on the physical symptoms as well as sexual history. It is also very important that a **woman tracks her**

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**ovulation** at home by recording her basal body temperature for several months, checking the texture of cervical mucus and using a home ovulation test kit.

## Additional tests to determine infertility

- Blood tests
- Ultrasound of the ovaries
- Hysterosalpingography to check for physical problems of the uterus and fallopian tubes
- Laparoscopy to check the ovaries, fallopian tubes, and uterus for disease and physical problems

## What Causes Female Infertility?

**Ovulation problems** are the primary cause of [female infertility](#). If ovulation does not occur, no eggs may be fertilized. However, there are also many contributing factors that can affect a woman's ability to have a baby. These include:

**Age** - Fertility peaks for both men and women in their mid-twenties. Most healthy women under the age of 30 generally do not have to be concerned about infertility unless they have been trying to get pregnant for at least a year. If much time has passed, women should consult their obstetrician or gynecologist for a fertility evaluation. **Infertility increases with age.** Women in their 30's who have been trying to get pregnant for six months should consult with their doctor. For a woman over the age of 35, conceiving may become a problem.

**Weight** - Maintaining a healthy body weight is vital for fertility. Being overweight or obese combined with a lack of exercise leads to excessive fat deposition, which may cause ovulation problems resulting in infertility. A low body weight and chronic dieting are also associated with amenorrhea or loss of menstrual cycles, making it difficult for ovulation to occur.

**Stress** - High stress levels may interfere with ovulation and the body's ability to conceive. When trying to become pregnant, women should learn to manage their stress through **relaxation techniques**.

**Smoking** - Smoking may affect your ability to become pregnant. Women run the risk of developing cervical and tube problems, abnormal menstrual cycles, and **hormonal imbalances**. When they do eventually become pregnant, an ectopic pregnancy may result. Generally, smokers take longer to conceive than non-smoking women.

**Poor diet** - Eating properly plays an important role in your body's fertility. A balanced diet of low-fat foods packed with healthy nutrients helps to **regulate hormones and nourish your reproductive system**. Avoid large quantities of sugary foods and caffeine, as they have been associated with infertility.

**Alcohol** - Regular drinking of alcohol can affect fertility. Drinking large amounts of alcohol regularly may cause menstrual cycles to be irregular, increasing the risk of miscarriage and birth defects in the baby.

**Athletic training** - Female athletes are often predisposed to conditions such as amenorrhea, eating disorders and osteoporosis. **Female reproductive**



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### Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist



All of our natural remedies are formulated by our expert team of herbalists, naturopaths and homeopaths, and headed by Michele Carelse.

Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

**functioning** is affected by the negative energy balance that results from disordered eating coupled with high training loads. Psychological stress and low body fat content can also be contributing factors that lead to an absence of menstruation and ovulation, resulting in infertility.

**Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)** - Infertility can sometimes be the result of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) or infection. If you are planning on becoming pregnant, get tested for sexually transmitted diseases to prevent further fertility problems or spread of the disease.

**Health problems that cause hormonal changes** - There are some health issues that may also increase the risk of infertility. **Women who suffer from irregular periods** or no menstrual periods, painful periods, polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), endometriosis, pelvic inflammatory disease, uterine fibroids or more than one miscarriage should consult their gynecologist or obstetrician.

## Help for Female Infertility

Once **infertility has been diagnosed**, there are a number of treatment options available depending on the root cause of the problem. These treatments are costly and generally based on the preference of both partners.

## Natural Remedies

For thousands of years, natural and holistic treatments have been used to **enhance fertility in women**. Treatments such as herbal and homeopathic remedies have a positive effect on the hormonal system, reproductive organs, and sex drive.

Use herbs such as Vitex agnus-castus (Chasteberry) to **help balance hormones** by stimulating the pituitary gland, which produces sex hormones such as estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone.

A traditional Chinese fertility herb known as Cimicifuga racemosa (Black Cohosh) may help to improve hormone functioning due to its phyto-estrogens. It is also used in the **prevention of miscarriage** and in the treatment of menopause.

In addition, Eleutherococcus senticosus (Siberian Ginseng) has many medicinal uses and helps to improve overall systemic health. It may also help to correct hormone imbalances, boost libido and sexual pleasure, and support uterine functioning.

There are also many ways to reduce stress and therefore increase chances of conception. These include therapeutic massage, listening to calming CD's, yoga, or even taking a daily, relaxing walk! Your **psychological state also plays a big part in promoting conception**.

Many women struggle to become pregnant despite a clean bill of health from their doctors. This could be attributed to **emotional factors or subconscious fears** arising from childhood experiences. Flower essences can be of great assistance in creating an emotional climate conducive to conception.

If you are a smoker, stop smoking naturally with non-nicotine based herbal and

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homeopathic remedies, and cut down on all alcohol consumption to increase your chances of becoming pregnant and having a healthy pregnancy.

## Conventional Medicine

**Infertility in women** may be treated with fertility drugs, surgery, artificial insemination or assisted reproductive technology. However, many of these treatment options may have negative side effects like premenstrual symptoms such as nausea, headaches, and weight gain.

In addition, fertility treatments have also been known to increase a woman's chance of having twins, triplets or other multiples. The most **common fertility drugs** are Clomiphene citrate (Clomid) and Gonadotropin-releasing **hormone products, which trigger the ovaries to release eggs.**

Your doctor may recommend surgery if your fallopian tubes are blocked or there are any anatomical defects. Surgery is also helpful if endometriosis, fibroids or ovarian cysts need to be removed.

Artificial insemination refers to a range of techniques in which the man's sperm is placed into the woman's genital tract artificially. Placing the sperm in the neck of the cervix is known as **intra-cervical insemination**. When sperm is introduced directly into the uterus itself, this is known as **intrauterine insemination, IUI.**

**Assisted reproductive technology** (ART) refers to the various methods used to help infertile couples. It entails the removal of eggs from a woman's body, then combining them with sperm in the laboratory, and placing the embryos back into the body.

The different types of **assisted reproductive technology** include *In vitro* fertilization, IVF, zygote intra-fallopian transfer, ZIFT or tubal-embryo transfer, gamete intra-fallopian transfer, GIFT and intracytoplasmic sperm injection, ICSI.

Other methods of ART also include **donor eggs and embryos** or gestational carriers, more commonly known as surrogate mothers. *In vitro* fertilization is the most popular and effective ART, with fertilization occurring outside the body. It is often used when a woman experiences ovulation problems or when her fallopian tubes are blocked.

## Tips to Enhance Conception

If you have been struggling to become pregnant, there are some useful tips that may help to increase your chances of conceiving and prevent miscarriages.

- Follow a healthy, balanced diet by eating plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, as well as foods that are rich in iron, calcium and folate, essential for reproductive health.
- **Maintain a healthy weight**, as being overweight or underweight can affect the body's hormone levels-- which in turn makes conception difficult.
- Regular exercise such as walking, swimming or cycling will help keep you fit and active before and during your pregnancy. It will also help get you back into shape after the pregnancy.



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- Avoid drinking alcohol and caffeine, as these can make you less fertile.
- **Stop smoking** to increase your chance of becoming pregnant, and try to naturally detox and cleanse your system. Quitting smoking also improves your partner's sperm quality.
- Increase your intake of folic acid, iron and calcium by taking supplements.
- Monitor your **basal body temperature** to determine the most likely time of ovulation and plan sexual activity.
- Reduce stress by **practicing relaxation techniques** such as acupuncture, visualization or meditation, or listen to calming music with guided imagery.
- **Manage negative emotions** during the pre-conception process by gaining support from your partner, family and friends.
- **Join a support group** or attend counseling services to help you to deal with depression, anger or guilt.

## The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is **not the only treatment option**. Conventional Western medicine (often called allopathic or orthodox medicine) is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools, and many pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed according to the principles of allopathic medicine.

Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that only a few decades ago, homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available and freely used-- even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is 'better' than the other, many responsible doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that **both natural and conventional remedies have a role to play in the treatment program**.

Natural medicine has often been frowned upon by conventional doctors, especially by those who do not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce it into their course work, thereby **providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options** from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, **natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed** by conventional doctors and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine) which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the **body has an innate capacity to heal itself**. While natural medicines are often called 'alternative' or 'complimentary' medicines, they are, in fact, a **unique and independent form of medicine** in their own right, well able to **treat a variety of conditions**. Perhaps the term 'holistic' medicine is more apt, given the broad range of treatment options and approaches which are to be found within the practice of natural medicine. This encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.

Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a **holistic way to support health, relieve symptoms and prevent future disease**. In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "... more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of

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physical, emotional, mental and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which strives to **support health** (thereby relieving or preventing symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.

Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer. In many cases, **holistic medicine can accomplish just as much**, if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs. Contrary to common perception, and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way, **natural medicines can work quickly and safely to promote healing**.

In many cases, they can **succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed**. Despite frequent reports that they are ‘unproven’ and ‘untested’, the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a **long history of usage** and there is a **wealth of empirical evidence** to support their effectiveness and safety. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to **support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines**.

It is also important to know that, like any medicine, herbal and homeopathic medicines **must be manufactured in the correct way**, following acceptable procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately, **not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards**, often resulting in a flood of inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market – and giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called ‘standardized’ extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth. While **‘standardized’ extracts** may offer benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper more efficient production lines), they have **grave disadvantages**, including an increase in side effects, as the medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the Full Spectrum Method of extraction – which **retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb** as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a more complete treatment as well as superior protection against side effects.

Whatever your choice, **always choose wisely**. Research what is best for you. If you have a chronic or life-threatening condition, don’t make changes without first discussing them with your doctor, in order that your condition may be monitored. **Well-informed and supportive practitioners will support patients** who want to take responsibility for their own health.

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Regular use of Fertile XX **supports normal hormone balance** in the female body and encourages **healthy egg production** and regular ovulation while also supporting overall systemic health.

The formula remains true to the **whole spectrum method** of herbal extraction, ensuring the bio-availability and balance of all the active ingredients contained in the remedy. This method of manufacture also significantly reduces the likelihood of side effects and maintains all active ingredients in perfect balance – exactly as nature intended!

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**Bringforth Life Flower Essence™**: Allow creative forces to blossom in women struggling to conceive or who have had frequent miscarriages.

Bringforth Life Flower Essence is a 100% natural, safe and effective formula of pure and undiluted flower essences to improve fertility and encourage healthy conception. Created for **women who are struggling to get pregnant** or who have had frequent miscarriages.

This essence helps to locate the sources of fear in the subconscious, allowing the creative force to blossom. By lifting deep feelings of abandonment, rejection and fear and releasing negativity, this essence helps to **overcome subconscious fears of pregnancy and parenthood** and allows the creative force to flow freely.

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Conception Essence is a unique combination of flower and gem essences in pure, undiluted stock strength. Created to **facilitate conception** and release the creative life force, Conception Flower Essence contains the following carefully chosen essences in our 100% natural formula.

Conception Flower Essence is formulated to the **highest therapeutic standards** and manufactured under strict pharmaceutical conditions, in consultation by our clinical psychologist, using ingredients specially chosen for their safety and effectiveness.

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