Women are born with all the eggs they are going to have. Female fertility declines markedly from age 35. By age 37, 90% of the eggs are gone. From puberty men produce sperm all their life but sperm quality declines with age.

In one ejaculate, men produce about 100 million sperm. Once a month, a woman produces one egg – only ovulating about 500 eggs in her whole lifetime.

Women and men should aim to be as healthy as possible before they start trying for a baby. Being a healthy weight, not smoking, limiting alcohol and caffeine, and exercising regularly increases the chance of pregnancy and is important for the long-term health of children.

Pregnancy is only possible from about five days before ovulation through to the day of ovulation – the fertile window. Having plenty of sex during these days boosts the chance of pregnancy.

Fertility is ageist! It’s best to start trying sooner than later. Women younger than 30 have about a 20% chance of getting pregnant each month but this drops to about 5% at age 40. When the male partner is over the age of 45 there is increased risk of miscarriage and certain conditions in the offspring, such as autism.

Most people get pregnant within a year of trying. If you have been trying for 12 months or more (six months if you’re a woman older than 35) without success, it’s time to talk to your doctor about your options as you may have infertility.

Sexually transmitted infections (including HIV and genital tuberculosis), mumps after puberty, an undescended testicle, polycystic ovary syndrome, endometriosis, menstrual cycle problems, some environmental pollutants and workplace chemicals can affect fertility. If you have concerns, talk to your doctor.

IVF cannot work miracles. The chance of having a baby after one IVF attempt is around 30% for women aged under 35, but only about 10% for women aged between 40 and 44 and over 45 it’s almost zero.

Fertility treatment can help infertile heterosexual couples, same-sex couples and single people have children. Talk to a fertility expert about the available options.

Do you want to have KIDS in the future?

9 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW NOW

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For more information visit www.fertilityed.uk or www.yourfertility.org.au. Fertility education is effective see https://doi.org/10.1093/humrep/dey107.