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GETTING PREGNANT

IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO MAKE SURE THAT COUPLES HAVE THE BEST CHANCE OF CONCEIVING

Essential Background Knowledge:

- A basic understanding of the timing of events in the female menstrual cycle is essential when trying to get pregnant / trying to conceive.
- The two most important occurrences during the female menstrual cycle are **menstruation** and **ovulation**.
 - The day on which the menstrual bleeding starts (in other words the first day of **menstruation**) is regarded as **Cycle Day 1** of a female's menstrual cycle.
 - **Ovulation** refers to the release of an egg cell from the woman's ovary. Ovulation will usually occur on **Cycle Day 14** of her menstrual cycle.
- For a woman to get pregnant, sperm needs to be present in her reproductive tract at the time of ovulation. If the egg cell that has been released gets fertilized by a sperm and implants in the uterus, you are pregnant!
- Therefore, in order for a couple to have the best chance of getting pregnant, sexual intercourse must be timed to take place as close to the day of ovulation as possible.
- Getting the timing right is really important: the egg cell will only survive for 12-24 hours after ovulation. If sexual intercourse takes place too early or too late, no live sperm will be present, the egg cell will die and fertilization and pregnancy will not be achieved.

Therefore, for a couple trying to get pregnant, the most important thing is to time baby-making-sex so that it takes place as close as possible to the day of ovulation.

How can you know exactly when ovulation takes place?

Two methods can be used to determine the day of ovulation for a specific woman:

Method 1 to Determine Ovulation: The Calendar Method

This is done as follows:

- 1. Determine the length (in days) of the female's menstrual cycle:**
 - Get a calendar
 - Cycle Day 1 is the first day of menstruation - mark it on the calendar as Day 1
 - Then count and mark every day as it goes by: Day 2, 3, 4, 5...
 - The end of the Cycle is the day just before the female starts bleeding again.
- 2. Once you have determined your cycle length, the day of ovulation can be predicted:**
 - Count back 14 days from when you expect your next period / menstruation - this is the estimated day of ovulation.

It is important to take note of the following:

- A typical menstrual cycle is 28 days but many women have cycles that are not exactly 28 days.
- The length of a female's cycle may also vary from month to month - eg. some months it may be 27 days and other months 26 days.
- Every female needs to determine her specific menstrual cycle length.
- Ideally, determining the cycle length should be done over the course of a few months - this will give you the most accurate answer.
- Just as the length of the menstrual cycle can vary, so too can the timing of ovulation. It is therefore not guaranteed that ovulation will always take place 14 days before your next period / menstruation.

Method 2 to Determine Ovulation: An Ovulation Predictor Kit

The calendar method is not always accurate in predicting the exact day of ovulation. Determining the day of ovulation with an Ovulation Predictor Kit is another option and is more accurate.

These kits test your urine for a surge in hormones that are associated with ovulation. As soon as the test shows a positive result, ovulation will usually take place within the next 12 to 48 hours.

Ovulation Predictor Kits are highly recommended and are available (without prescription) from most pharmacies. They are easy to use but do make sure that you read the instructions carefully and follow them exactly.

Now that you are able to determine when ovulation will occur, you need to look at the timing of baby-making-sex:

For each menstrual cycle, a woman will be most fertile on the day of ovulation and the 4 days just before ovulation. This is called her "fertile window".

You will have the best chance of getting pregnant if sex can be timed to take place during your "fertile window", in other words during the 4 days just before ovulation as well as on the day of ovulation.

If you are unable to predict the day of ovulation, have sex every two to three days starting soon after the end of your period. This can help ensure that you will indeed have sex during the fertile window.

Other Useful Tips:

- During the fertile window, baby-making-sex can take place either every day or every second day - this will not make any difference to the chances of getting pregnant.
- **For the men:** If you are waiting to have sex until your female partner's fertile window, make sure you haven't gone through too long of a dry spell beforehand. The male should ejaculate at least once in the days just before baby-making-sex, otherwise there could be a build-up of poor quality sperm in the semen, resulting in lower pregnancy rates.
It is a common misconception among men that frequent ejaculation will decrease their chances of achieving pregnancy and that they should "store" adequate numbers of sperm before engaging in baby-making-sex. This is not true - in fact you, delaying ejaculation for too long periods is likely to reduce your sperm quality and your chances of achieving pregnancy.
- Try to stay away from lubricants when having baby-making-sex. Most lubricants (including KY-jelly and even saliva) can harm sperm and significantly reduce your chances of getting pregnant. If you do need to use a lubricant then unscented baby-oil is probably the best as it has been shown to not affect sperm health.
- There is no research that proves one sexual position to be more effective than another when trying to conceive.

PLEASE NOTIFY MY OFFICE IMMEDIATELY OF ANY PREGNANCY