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Initiative

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# Infertility – lets banish the myths and taboos

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# Who Am I?



- I'm Rakhee, mum to IVF-conceived twins Shyam and Shivani
- Male factor infertility
- Retrained as a holistic practitioner and now almost qualified functional nutritional medicine practitioner
- Sharing as much education around the topic to support those going through and educate others around you
- Wanting to break the taboos around infertility

# What is Infertility?

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- When a couple have been free of contraception and actively trying to conceive for 18-24 months (or 12 months if the woman is over 35) and no pregnancy has resulted. – **Seek medical support at this point in time to get the ball rolling for tests. You can go to my website to see a list of ALL of the tests you should get done and when in your cycle for the woman.**
- Affects up to 1 in 6 couples. **That is soon to become 1 in 3**
- We are waiting to try for a baby until much later than previous generations. **Natural fertility declines with age so it's not fertility that is declining as such but we're trying much later**
- The journey can be longer, and more stressful, due to all the modern treatment options available.
- Complementary therapies, such as Fertility Reflexology, Acupuncture, Kinesiology and Reiki are a very popular choice to help on this journey.

# The Barage of tests

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## Woman:

Blood tests (LH, FSH, AMH, prolactin, progesterone, thyroid)

- LH and FSH are day 2 and day 3 tests – look at ratios to see if Polycystic ovaries
- AMH – Anti Malarian Hormone which checks Egg reserve – this can be done at any time of the cycle
- Progesterone is day 21 test – remember its not day 21 exactly but 7 days post OV

Abdominal ultrasound scan

Internal examination

Chlamydia test – STD which can cause Pelvic Inflammatory Disease PID

HSG (Hysterosalpingogram)/Hycosy – Dye test

Laparoscopy - surgery useful for diagnosing Endometriosis

## Man:

Semen analysis

Maybe some blood tests

# Causes of Infertility

PCOS  
Endometriosis  
Luteal Phase Defect  
Low egg reserve  
Poor egg quality/ 'aging eggs'  
Tubal damage or surgery  
Uterine issues  
Chlamydia – PID (Pelvic Inflammatory Disease)  
Hormonal imbalances  
Peri-menopause  
Ashermans Syndrome  
Fibroids  
Anovulation  
Premature Ovarian Failure  
Recurrent miscarriage  
Chemical pregnancies  
Molar pregnancies  
NK cells/immunological issues  
Blood clotting disorders

Vitamin/mineral deficiencies  
Vaginismus  
Effect of previous contraception  
Sterilisation reversal  
Secondary infertility  
Unexplained infertility (**most common one 20-25%**)

Low sperm count  
Poor motility  
Poor morphology  
Sperm anti-bodies  
Zero count  
Vasectomy reversal  
Retrograde ejaculation  
Impotence

# “Unexplained Infertility”

- No medical reason has been found
- Can be reassuring, but mostly frustrating
- Accounts for 20% of all cases of infertility
- Is there still a reason?
- Not infertile? Had tests too soon?
- A cause not found with tests?
- Emotional/psychological/nutritional reasons?

# Treatment Options

- Ovulation stimulating drugs (Clomid, Tamoxifen, Femara, etc)
- (Clomid linked to ovarian cancer, multiple births and over stimulation. Tamoxifen is breast cancer drug, Metformin used to try and reverse the PCOS)
- IUI (Intra Uterine Insemination)
- IVF (In Vitro Fertilization)
- ICSI (Intra Cytoplasmic Sperm Injection)
- Donor egg/sperm
- Surrogacy

# Help – I am Struggling

- I don't want IVF
- IVF hasn't worked for me
- I can get pregnant but can't stay pregnant
- There is nothing wrong with either of us, so why can't we get pregnant?

# What can I do to help?

There are so many ways you can help yourself naturally to improve your chances of conceiving

- Food choices
- Lifestyle choices
- Emotional Wellbeing
- Physical wellbeing

# The Fertility Diet

- XNo alcohol, caffeine, cigarettes, or drugs.
- XNo refined sugar. No processed foods.
- XNo tap water.
- XAvoid ALL products that are low-fat dairy products/diet/no sugar/low sugar.
  
- ✓ As organic as possible.
- ✓ Whole/unrefined foods.
- ✓ Good quality fertility supplements – **Not PREGNACARE OR WELLMAN**
- ✓ Filtered water.
- ✓ Balance the plate – Good quality protein, Good Fats and Carbs (Fruit/Veg/Grains)
- ✓ Go Gluten free and Dairy free if you present with any autoimmune or digestive issues

# Lifestyle Tips

- Have adequate sleep – at least 7-8 hours of undisturbed sleep
- No mobile phones or electronic gadgets in the bedroom
- Have 30-60 mins digital detox downtime before bed and get to bed for 10pm
- Eat at a dining table and not on the sofa in front of the TV
- Avoid eating later than 8 pm (for digestion purposes)
- Reduce the amount of chemical toxicity in your home (skincare, chemicals, electromagnetic)
- Get intimate again – intimacy DOESN'T have to lead to sex but bring back the passion and excitement into the relationship – many couples lose themselves here
- Make time for yourself too – it's allowed and you are not being selfish

- Emotions are one of the biggest things affecting a couple on their infertility journey
- We are a nation that doesn't want to talk much about infertility
- It is natural to be scared of the journey not working
- Journalling
- Letter Writing
- Deep Breathing
- BACH Remedies
- Give yourself 3 months to heal
- Get support from the family – be open with them and parents do your bit and support the children. The last thing they need especially the daughter-in-law is to be judged

- Now is not the time to start training for the London Marathon
- Don't be sedentary
- Yoga, walking, and gentle weight training are good exercises
- If you're already active then keep going but often exercise stresses the body out too
- If you have PCOS, avoid HIIT
- For the woman, keep the abdomen and bum areas warm and wear socks on the feet if you suffer from cold feet
- Have some relaxation time too
- Castor oil packs for the ladies too

# Additional Tips for Men

- Exclude alcohol, caffeine, and smoking.
- Take specialist male fertility supplements with amino acids.
- Avoid hot baths, saunas, heated car seats & laptop on lap. No mobiles in the front pocket.
- Beware of excessive cycling.

# Additional tests to consider

- Hair Tissue Mineral Analysis to measure the mineral content in the body – the hair can tell you a lot about your health before blood tests can/will.
- If you have any autoimmune conditions, consider doing a comprehensive stool test – it will tell you what is going on with your gut
- Dutch Plus test – can tell you about hormones and adrenal function
- A full private thyroid test that tests for antibodies and ALL of the thyroid hormones (not just TSH and T4)

- Miscarriages are a woman's fault
- Men don't need to worry about their fertility – they have sperm till they die
- Only a woman needs to prepare for pregnancy
- Women can't get pregnant after 35
- Infertility doesn't affect those under 35
- You can't have infertility issues if you already have conceived a child
- Ovulation occurs exactly on day 14
- It's ok, IVF will get me pregnant



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**Thank you!**