Trying to conceive? Why am I not pregnant yet? ¹

(1) Dear Alice,

My husband and I have been trying to conceive for two months now with no success. I'm 34 and he is 35. I have bought early ovulation tests and everything. My question to you is that it seems that my cervical fluid is never "egg white" slippery until a few days before my period. So what are some other symptoms that I need to pay attention to? I have been pregnant before but I terminated it. I was 23 years old when I did. Could this be a reason why I'm not getting pregnant?

HELP! Desperately Seeking Pregnancy

(2) Dear Alice,

My husband and I have been trying to have a baby for five months without any success. What's wrong?

Answer

Dear HELP! Desperately Seeking Pregnancy and Reader,

A wise person once said the true but (sometimes) infuriating phrase, "patience is a virtue? " a saying that certainly applies to baby-making. You both sound eager to start families, so it?s understandable that you?re seeking answers. After all, doesn?t it seem like you hear about accidental pregnancies all the time? Could it really be that hard to conceive? The truth is that it takes most couples up to a year of ?trying? before their little bun starts baking in the oven. While a couple months might feel like an eternity, it?s possible that the third (or fourth, fifth, sixth, etc.) time?s the charm. As long as each of you and your partners continue to stay open for business (a.k.a., keep having unprotected sex), you will likely have a chance of getting pregnant. Rest assured that the decision to terminate a previous pregnancy likely wouldn?t hinder the ability to conceive now. When performed in a medical setting by a health care provider, abortions do not cause infertility or problems.²

Many of the issues around trying to get pregnant can be boiled down to one simple factor: timing. To get pregnant, a lucky little sperm has to hook up with an egg at just the right moment ? just before, during, or after ovulation.³ Although every woman?s body is on a slightly different clock, you can actually use some clues to figure out when you?re ovulating. Enter the symptothermal method.⁴ This method employs monitoring and tracking your body for temperature, timing, and cervical mucus in order to determine when you?re most fertile.
during your menstrual cycle. Home ovulation kits [5] can also be used to detect hormones in your urine that signal fertility. These kits are often available for purchase at many pharmacies and drug stores.

If you?re still concerned about your fertility or you don?t conceive within a year, you and your husband may consider meeting with a health care provider to see if infertility could be the culprit. If it is, then s/he can advise you both on possible solutions or options. Long story short, anything that affects the quality of the egg, sperm, or the ability of the sperm to reach the egg can affect fertility. If you would like additional information, the Mayo Clinic [6] outlines many of the causes for male and female infertility.

HELP! Desperately Seeking Pregnancy, you mention that you?re 34 years old. While women in their mid to late 30s may face more challenges in conceiving and sustaining pregnancies, plenty of women in their 30s do have successful pregnancies. Consider reviewing the Go Ask Alice! Q&A Is it risky to have a baby after turning 35? [7] for additional information. It may just require a few more tries ? perhaps an excuse to have more sex isn?t a bad thing!

Bottom line: It's still a bit early to worry, it takes many couples up to a year to get pregnant. Unfortunately, humans just aren?t quite as prolific at procreating as some other members of the animal kingdom (we?re lookin? at you, bunnies). While the possibility of infertility issues might feel daunting, many couples do have successful pregnancies after a year or so of trying.

Best of luck to you both!

Alice!

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Related questions

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