

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO GETTING PREGNANT



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Your purchase assists the American Pregnancy Association in achieving its mission of helping women and families experience a healthy pregnancy.

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CHAPTER 1

GETTING STARTED

STARTING YOUR FAMILY is one of the most exciting times of your life. Having a child ranks as one of the most life-changing and rewarding decisions you will ever make. You are in good company. There are over 4.2 million births¹ in the United States each year and 136 million² worldwide.

For some lucky couples, the road to parenthood is smooth and short. Unfortunately, a lot of couples find the road is filled with anxiety and stress as they discover getting pregnant is more difficult and takes longer than they originally thought. Hopefully, this guide will equip you with the knowledge you need to make your journey to parenthood worry free and successful.

1. CDCs National Center for Health Statistics, http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr57/nvsr57_12.pdf

2. Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, World Population Prospects: The 2008 Revision, <http://esa.un.org/unpp>

YOU ARE NOT ALONE. IT TAKES TIME.

Whether you have just started out, or have been trying to get pregnant for awhile, be patient. It takes time to conceive. Getting pregnant is not like flipping on a switch.

When everything is done right and there are no complications, the average healthy

CONCEPTION FACT:

The healthier you are, the greater your chances of conceiving and carrying a child full-term.

Ideally, you should take at least three months getting healthy and preparing your body for conception.

couple has only a 25% chance of getting pregnant each month. This is the best-case scenario. Therefore, it can take 4 months or longer for a typical couple to become pregnant. So don't worry if you have been trying to conceive for a couple of months without luck—this is normal.

To put things in perspective, try flipping a coin until it comes up heads. How many tries did it take you? Keep repeating the experiment. What was the highest number of tries it took to come up heads? Three? Four? Five or more? Because the probability of flipping a coin (50%) is twice

that of getting pregnant each month (25%), if it took you four times to come up heads, that is the same luck as having to try 8 months to get pregnant!

So if you have been trying for four months or more, don't give up hope. You are not alone. There are millions of couples who are trying to conceive at any given moment with similar success rates. Most likely, it is just the luck of the draw.

Luckily, there are things you can do to increase your odds each month. This guide will give you the knowledge you need to enhance your efforts and make sure you have the best possible chance each month.

SHOULD I BE CONCERNED WITH INFERTILITY?

A diagnosis of infertility is given to couples who have been trying to conceive for 12 months or more without success. Most health care professionals believe you should be able to conceive within a year. If you have been trying for 12 months or longer without success, it is time to contact your obstetrician or a fertility specialist and have a fertility evaluation.

It is important that both partners are examined because fertility issues could be attributed to either one of you—or both. In fact, about one third of all infertility cases are accounted for by the woman's reproductive health, one third by the man's reproductive health, and one-third collectively as a couple. Any recommendations for continuing the journey to conceive or how you grow your family will depend on the results of the examination.

STARTING THE JOURNEY

More than likely, you are just getting started and want to do things right. This guide will provide you with all the right steps. To begin, we will explore the basics of ovulation—the foundation to conceiving—followed by ways to track your monthly ovulation cycle.

This guide will also identify nutritional and health tips for both men and women to enhance fertility. We'll also make sure you are doing things right in the bedroom while keeping it fun. And finally, we will close out the guide with a Top 10 checklist that you can easily refer back to for maximizing your efforts to conceive.

Congratulations—growing your family is a time for fun and celebration. Delivering a “big fat positive” on your pregnancy test is our goal, and this guide will maximize your efforts and give you the knowledge you need to achieve that success.



CHAPTER 2

OVULATION: THE KEY TO CONCEPTION

UNDERSTANDING OVULATION IS the key to conception. The bottom line is that all couples want to know when is the best time to have sex in order to get pregnant. From the egg's perspective, there is only a 12 to 24 hour period where a woman can conceive. So how do you know when your window of conception is? The answer lies around ovulation. By understanding your ovulation cycle, you can target the optimal time frame for conception.

Some of the most common questions received at the *American Pregnancy Association* are:

- When does ovulation occur—before or after my period?
- Is it best to have sex before or during ovulation?
- What day of the month gives me the greatest chance of conception?

Those are important questions. To answer them, we need to learn the basics of ovulation.

OVULATION BASICS

To begin, let's nail down what we mean by **ovulation**. Ovulation is the point when an egg is released from the ovary so that it may travel down the fallopian tube and become fertilized by waiting sperm. During ovulation, the lining of the uterine wall thickens so that a fertilized egg can become implanted and continue the pregnancy.

ESSENTIAL OVULATION FACTS

- An egg is only available for fertilization for 12 to 24 hours
- Usually only 1 egg is released during each cycle
- Ovulation often rotates between ovaries
- Light bleeding may occur during ovulation
- It is possible to ovulate even if a period has not occurred

BEFORE OR AFTER MY PERIOD?

Does ovulation occur before or after my period? This is one of the most common questions asked by women beginning to track their ovulation. Technically, ovulation *should* occur around 14 days before your period. However, in terms of tracking your ovulation, it may be better to think of it occurring in the middle, about halfway-between two periods for an average 28 day cycle.

Let's assume you have a 28 day cycle each month. If you count 14 days backwards from the first day of any period (the day bleeding starts), or if you count 14 days forwards from the first day of any period, you will find that ovulation should occur on day 14 or 15 of your cycle — either way you count. Because 14, the average day of ovulation, is exactly half of a 28 day cycle, it is mathematically in the middle.

The problem is no one is average—every woman is different. Your cycles could be 32 days on average and not 28. On top of that, cycles are not always the same length each month. One month may be longer than the next. Past history does not always predict the future. In fact, as we will see, there is only a small chance ovulation will occur on day 14 of your cycle.

THE 14 DAY FALLACY

Most clinical guidelines, doctors and reproductive professionals still state with absolute certainty that ovulation occurs exactly 14 days before your period regardless of the woman or her cycle. As we know from recent studies, that belief is just wrong. The data shows that ovulation rarely occurs 14 days before a woman's next period.