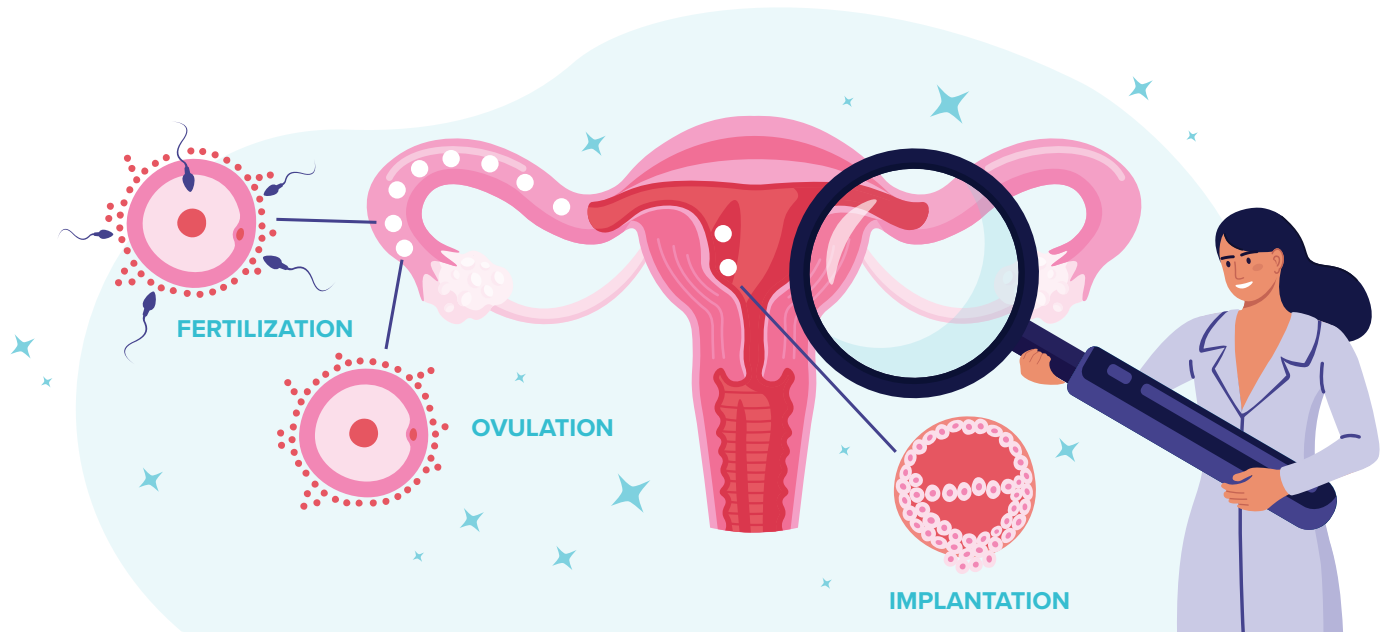


## FERTILITY AND PLANNING A FAMILY



Fertility is the ability to conceive and bear children. Women are born with about 1-2 million eggs, but release only 300 to 400 through ovulation during their lifetime. Each month, an egg is released from an ovary (**ovulation**) and travels through one of the fallopian tubes to the uterus. Sperm may meet with and fuse to the egg (**fertilization**) on its way to the uterus, even after living up to 3 or 5 days in the female reproductive tract. The body releases hormones that promote the movement and meeting of the egg and sperm and prepare the uterus to house a fertilized egg (**implantation**). If the egg is not fertilized, this

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**It is UNTRUE that birth control use (hormonal contraceptives, LARCs, etc.) causes infertility. While certain contraceptives might mask menstrual cycle irregularities that may contribute to future infertility, more than 83% of women become pregnant within 12 months after discontinuing contraception.**

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preparatory process is transitioned to menstruation, allowing the body to reset for another cycle over the next 21-35 days.

### FAMILY PLANNING

Crafting a [Reproductive Life Plan](#) encourages both women and men to set goals for having or not having children and to develop strategies for successful family planning. It takes into consideration your personal values, resources, and goals. Some sample questions to ask yourself include:

- Do I hope to have any (more) children?
- How long do I plan to wait until I become pregnant (again)?
- Have I looked at my family health history to see if I am at risk for a disease or condition that may impact fertility and/or pregnancy?

A woman's fertility peaks in her 20s, and by age 35 begins to significantly decline, even in healthy women. Male fertility also decreases with age; however, age-related male infertility is often not a problem before age 60.

**Common factors that can present challenges to fertility include:**

- Age (>40 years old)
- Weight (obesity or underweight)
- Smoking, alcohol, and drug use
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Certain chronic health conditions (e.g., diabetes, thyroid disease, celiac disease, sickle cell anemia)

**Talk to your health care provider about all your family planning options, timeline, and goals, so you can determine whether fertility preservation is a path you would like to pursue.**

**Ways to promote your personal and reproductive health:**

- Track your menstrual cycle and ovulation
- Maintain your well woman exams with your health care provider
- Refrain from smoking, drug, and alcohol use
- Avoid toxic substances and environmental contaminants
- Reach and maintain a healthy weight
- Manage existing health issues (e.g., diabetes, anemia)
- Investigate relevant family medical history
- Explore health insurance considerations and coverage



**FERTILITY PRESERVATION**

Fertility preservation is a process that saves or protects eggs, sperm, or reproductive tissue, leaving the option open to have biological children in the future. While this method can be used to delay parenthood, individuals with certain health conditions or treatments that lead to diminished fertility can also benefit from fertility preservation. **It is important to understand that preserving reproductive cells does not guarantee future viability or a successful pregnancy.**

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

- Flo Health App\*
- Reproductive Life Plan Worksheet

\*The Federal Trade Commission provides [guidance to customers](#) on how to select and use health apps while reducing privacy risks.

**References**

American Society for Reproductive Medicine (2012). *Age and Fertility: A Guide for Patients*. [https://www.reproductivefacts.org/globalassets/rf/news-and-publications/bookletsfact-sheets/english-fact-sheets-and-info-booklets/Age\\_and\\_Fertility.pdf](https://www.reproductivefacts.org/globalassets/rf/news-and-publications/bookletsfact-sheets/english-fact-sheets-and-info-booklets/Age_and_Fertility.pdf)

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