

Coping with Fertility Problems

Fertility problems may be very stressful. They may touch all aspects of a woman's life, including her relationships with her partner, family, friends, and co-workers. They may also affect her feelings about herself and about life in general. Many women who cannot have a baby feel strong losses, including not being able to experience pregnancy, birth, parenthood, and becoming a grandparent.

Ways to Cope with Fertility Problems

Coping with fertility problems can be very **challenging**. But there are many things you can do to deal with the stress you may be feeling as you progress through diagnosis and treatment:

Learn ways to manage your stress.

- Talk to your partner. Maintaining a healthy relationship is very important.
- Take up meditation or yoga, or learn new ways to relax.
- Exercise regularly to help release tension and stay fit.
- Eat a healthy diet, and limit your intake of caffeine and alcohol.
- Prepare for events that you know will be stressful, such as holidays.

- Read books about infertility. They can help you learn about treatment options and show you that your feelings are normal.
- Learn about your health plan coverage and finances. This will help you make good decisions about fertility treatments.

Reach out to others in need.

Sometimes when people help others, they help themselves.

Join a support group. You may:

- Feel less alone.
- Express your emotions without feeling like others are judging you.
- Learn coping skills.
- Form strong friendships.
- Feel better about yourself.

RESOLVE:

The National Infertility Association sponsors infertility support groups all over the United States.

Go to www.resolve.org, or call 703-556-7172.

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When to See an Infertility or Mental Health Counselor

Many people benefit from seeing an infertility or mental health counselor. They may talk about things like how to communicate better with their partner, how to decide between different treatments, and other ways to have a family.

Sometimes people need extra help to cope with their fertility problems. The checklist below will help you figure out if you may need extra help. Discuss this list with a family member who may have seen signs that you are not aware of.

Place a checkmark by any and all statements that apply to you, and share the checklist with your doctor or counselor.

- I have lost interest in the activities I used to enjoy, such as:
 - daily activities hobbies sex.
- I feel sad or “empty” most of the time.
- I feel guilty or worthless most of the time.
- I feel angry or bitter most of the time.

- I have tense relationships with others.
- I can't think about anything except my fertility problems.
- I feel anxious.
- I have trouble concentrating.
- I have a hard time finishing things I start.
- I have sleep problems (sleep too much or sleep too little).
- I am not hungry, and I am losing weight.
- I eat all the time, and I am gaining weight.
- I am using drugs or alcohol.
- I think about dying.

For more information about coping with fertility problems, talk to your doctor.

