



MY *fertility* STORY

IN THE KNOW



What No One Tells You About
Fertility and Your Jewish Faith



UNDERSTANDING FERTILITY AND YOUR JEWISH FAITH

Starting a family can be difficult for anyone. But for someone of Jewish faith, there are additional considerations, especially when natural conception isn't possible. Fortunately for couples whose faith has an impact on their options, there are specialists and organizations focused on turning dreams of conception into reality.

When you met your bashert and started planning a family, you probably never imagined reading a booklet like this one. Your original plan to start a family was, and is, a good one. You may have reached a small detour on your quest, but the destination will be worth the journey.

Realistic expectations can give you peace of mind now that you've decided to grow your family. This brochure was designed to help you be "in the know" about fertility and your Jewish faith and to provide tools and resources to help you navigate your journey to parenthood.

DID YOU KNOW

1 in 8
couples has
difficulty
conceiving

HALAKHIC INFERTILITY

Some couples think they're infertile when they're actually suffering from "Halakhic infertility," in which the woman ovulates right before the Mikvah, and the couple is missing their fertile window.

ACCORDING TO THE HALAKHAH (JEWISH LAW), A WOMAN:



Separates from her husband sexually when she detects bleeding from her uterus



Attends the ritual bath (Mikvah)



Abstains from sexual relations through the required number of days

If you observe these traditions and are having trouble conceiving, it's important to figure out if and when you're ovulating.

Since an ovum (egg) is able to be fertilized for 12 to 24 hours, intercourse should ideally take place shortly before or during ovulation. If you ovulate more than 24 hours before intercourse, you may not conceive.

WHEN TO VISIT YOUR DOCTOR

If your ovulation cycle occurs more than 12 to 24 hours before intercourse, there are options that may help with conception. Make an appointment with your doctor to discuss:

- A Mikvah schedule that **better accommodates** your cycle
- Ways to **change** your ovulation timing



EVERYONE IS ON YOUR SIDE

The first thing to remember is that the Jewish and medical communities want you to be successful and have a baby. Your rabbi and your doctor are on your team, and Jewish tradition prioritizes the act of procreation above many other values and rituals.

QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

It's a good idea to organize your thoughts before each appointment to ensure you get the most out of your visits. Prepare questions in advance, and remember not to be shy—if you don't understand your doctor's answers, don't hesitate to ask for a better explanation.

YOU MAY HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT JEWISH AUTHORITIES HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THE USE OF FERTILITY TREATMENTS:

- Does Jewish law allow treatments like assisted reproductive technologies?
- Will being an observant Jew interfere with the effectiveness of treatment?
- Will members of the medical community understand and be respectful of my beliefs?
- Do the treatments have to be done on specific days?
- What if they fall on a Jewish holiday or the Sabbath?
- How will this affect my husband?
- Is my husband involved in the treatment and will he be tested?



Visit [Fertility.com](https://www.fertility.com) or scan the QR code for more guidance on what to ask your doctor

HALAKHIC SUPERVISION

Certain fertility procedures involve transferring sperm and/or eggs from one person's body to another. When this occurs, Halakhic supervision may be required to verify the identity of all genetic materials.

If you undergo a procedure like this, confirm with your doctor that a Halakhic supervisor may be present during all stages. Some facilities have a Halakhic supervisor on staff, others will provide one if you ask, and some may not allow it. If your facility allows it but has no Halakhic supervisor on staff, ask your religious adviser about finding one.



FAITH AND LOGISTICS

If you and your doctor decide to use procedures that require the transfer of genetic materials, be sure to ask about:

- The timing of when the eggs and sperm are collected in relation to the Mikvah
- Halakhic supervision of the lab handling the egg and the sperm during fertilization and implantation into the uterus
- Bleeding that may occur during the treatment (it's not always uterine bleeding)
- How to time any treatments in relation to Shabbat and the holidays



GENETIC COUNSELING

People of certain ancestry may have a higher risk for some genetic conditions without ever knowing it. When two people of similar backgrounds conceive, the risk for passing on these diseases increases. Your doctor may recommend that you consult a genetic counselor to assess the risk of passing on those diseases.



If you choose in vitro fertilization (IVF), preimplantation genetic diagnosis testing is performed before the embryo is transferred to the uterus. This procedure can detect Down syndrome, cancer, cystic fibrosis, hemophilia A, Tay-Sachs disease, and Turner syndrome, along with other disorders.

DOR YESHORIM

Another great resource for genetic screening is Dor Yeshorim. This is a confidential genetic screening system that was created to prevent the transmission of genetic disorders that have an increased frequency among the Orthodox Jewish community.

Your doctor will be able to explain all of your options and benefits during genetic counseling.

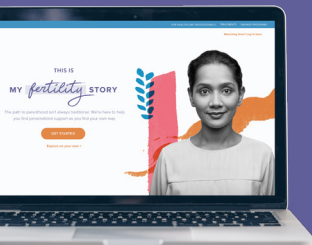


Scan the QR code for **more information about genetic counseling**

MY FERTILITY STORY IS AVAILABLE 24/7

Helpful information is always accessible at [Fertility.com](https://www.fertility.com)

Find family-building resources, guides to prepare for appointments, and stories from others facing infertility.



SUPPORT NETWORK AND RESOURCES

Remember that you're surrounded by people who can offer guidance outside your doctor's office as well. Seek the counsel of your support network throughout this journey in accordance with your Jewish faith:

- Your rabbi
- Rabbi's wife/rebbetzin
- Mikvah attendant
- Bridal/Kallah teacher
- Jewish law adviser/yoetzet halakha



RESOURCES

There are also organizations to help observant Jewish couples overcome infertility:

A.T.I.M.E.

(A Torah Infertility Medium of Exchange)

☎ 718-686-8912 🌐 atime.org

Bonei'Olam

☎ 718-252-1212 🌐 boneiolam.org

The Puah Institute

☎ 718-336-0603 🌐 puahonline.org

Fertility LifeLines®

for financial assistance for EMD Serono medications

☎ 1-866-LETS-TRY (1-866-538-7879)

🌐 Fertiltysavings.com

RESOLVE

for equal access to family-building options for those experiencing infertility

🌐 RESOLVE.org

Family Equality Council

for outreach programs and timely educational information

🌐 familyequality.org

Livestrong Fertility

for cancer patients whose medical treatments risk infertility

☎ 1-855-220-7777

🌐 livestrongfertility.org



MY *fertility* STORY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to thank Dr. Joshua U. Klein, MD, Reproductive Endocrinologist and Fertility Specialist. Dr. Klein specializes in treating infertile couples and has clinical and research experience in all aspects of fertility, including the treatment of reproductive and ovarian aging and reproductive disorders such as polycystic ovarian syndrome. Dr Klein is a cofounder of Extend Fertility, where he currently practices. Extend Fertility is one of the largest egg-freezing practices in the country that also provides IVF and infertility services.



Visit [Fertility.com](https://www.fertility.com) or scan the QR code for more support on your path to parenthood