
INFERTILITY-SUPPORT NEWSLETTER

{THE LONG WALK TO PARENTHOOD}

<http://www.infertility-support.org.za>

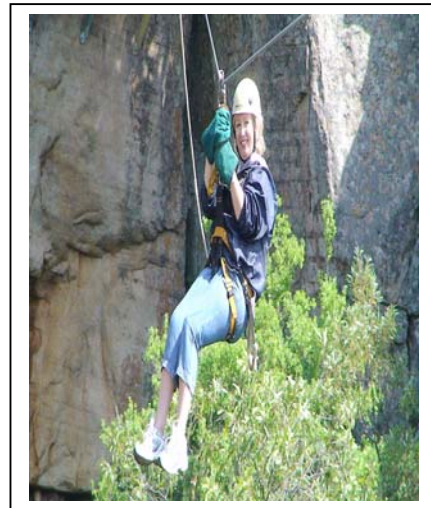
April / May 2009

2009 – Issue 2

A WORD FROM THE FOUNDER

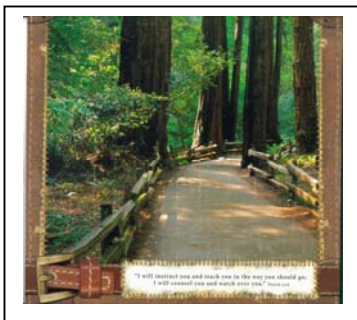
The Infertility Support Network (TISN) has grown steadily since the last newsletter with an audience now with men as well and communication with couples outside the borders of South Africa. Infertility may challenge any couple with little regard for race, culture, educational background and social status. Couples are encouraged to **hang in there**,

maintain as healthy a lifestyle as possible and explore other options to become parents if they feel comfortable to do so. Lastly, but by no means the least, keep your faith ... Jeremiah 29.11 – “For I have a plan for your life ... plans to prosper you, not to harm you”



Krishnee Kissoonduth

HYPERTHYROIDISM VS HYPOTHYROIDISM



Hypothyroidism is a condition in which the body lacks sufficient thyroid hormone. Since the main purpose of thyroid hormone is to “run the body’s metabolism”, it is understandable that people with this condition will have symptoms associated with a slow metabolism.

Symptoms include fatigue, weakness, weight gain or increased difficulty losing weight, coarse/dry hair, dry/rough/pale skin, hair loss, cold intolerance, muscle cramps/frequent muscle aches, constipation, depression, irritability, memory loss and **abnormal menstrual cycles**. Hypothyroidism may be associated with an increased frequency of menstrual periods in patients with mild to moderate thyroid failure and a lack of menstruation when hypothyroidism is severe. There may be problems with ovulation and conception due to hypothyroidism itself or associated hormonal changes.

In some patients with severe hypothyroidism, the pituitary gland produces increased amounts of a hormone known as prolactin. Increased prolactin secretions can “turn off” normal menstrual cycles. If you are hypothyroid, you may not ovulate. Hypothyroidism has also been associated with an increased risk of having cysts form on your ovaries or polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS). Some researchers believe that women with untreated hypothyroidism who do conceive have an increased risk for their children to be born with physical abnormalities or mental retardation. Spontaneous abortion and fetal death are two other potentially serious complications of hypothyroidism.

Hyperthyroidism is the medical term to describe the signs and symptoms associated with an overproduction of thyroid hormone. Typical symptoms of hyperthyroidism include palpitations, heat intolerance, nervousness, insomnia, breathlessness, increased bowel movements, weight loss, muscle weakness, hair loss and light or **absent menstrual periods**.



From an infertility point of view, it is advisable that a woman test her thyroid level through a simple blood test prior to proceeding with any form of fertility treatment. Hypothyroidism and hyperthyroidism is completely treatable in many patients simply by taking a small pill once a day.

YOU MAY BE PREGNANT BUT DON'T KNOW IT YET

Dealing with the rollercoaster ride of infertility can drive you insane especially if you “read into” every signal that your body gives you. At the same time, one hears often of someone that only discovered in their third month that they were, in fact, pregnant. Some women who experience signs and symptoms of pregnancy may not even be pregnant, while others who are pregnant don't have any of the common symptoms. If you've been planning to have a baby or if this isn't your first pregnancy, you might know what signs to look out for. If you're a first timer or if you've been caught off guard, the symptoms may creep up on you. Many women confuse the early symptoms of pregnancy with pre-menstrual symptoms. Here are six of the most common signs and symptoms to look out for before even buying a home pregnancy test or making an appointment to see your gynaecologist :

- a) Spotting (implantation bleeding)
Implantation (egg burrows into the endometrial lining of womb) takes place approximately 12 days after conception. Some women also bleed at that time mistaking the slight bleed for a period.

- b) Frequent urination

The need to urinate frequently is caused by an increase in the blood flow to the kidneys which in turn produces more urine.

- c) Feeling tired and or sluggish

Feeling tired and sluggish can be attributed to the rise in the HCG hormone. The increase in progesterone also causes the body temperature to increase to around 37.8 degrees. This is why pregnant women feel very hot and experience sweating in the hands and feet. In the first six weeks the blood flow in your body increases by 50% causing you to feel extremely tired until around 12 weeks.



- d) Tender / aching breasts – An increase in blood flow and the Human Chorionic Gonadotrophin (HCG) hormone are responsible for tender aching breasts. Within 2-4 weeks after conception, milk ducts grow and mature to prepare for breast feeding, causing a tingling sensation and, in some women, aches. The dark area around the nipple may darken.
- e) Morning sickness – Nausea and vomiting can be experienced as early as one week into pregnancy. It is caused by an increase in hormonal activity in the body, stress and fatigue. Over 50% of women experience morning sickness, but it is not exclusive to the morning and can last all day.
- f) Constipation and heartburn – During pregnancy, hormones slow down bowel movements to provide baby with the maximum amount of nutrients causing constipation in the mother. Increasing your fluid and fibre intake, will make a difference.

Mamas & Papas : March/April 2009

PERIOD PAIN



Period pain is painful menstrual cramps from the uterus. In medical terms, this is called dysmenorrhoea. Up to 70% of women suffer with the aches and pains that accompany menstruation. Period pain feels like crampy pain in the lower abdomen which may be a sharp pain that comes and goes or a dull aching pain. There may also be back pain. The pain may begin several days before or just at the start of your period.

It generally subsides once the menstrual bleeding starts to taper off. There can also be symptoms of nausea and vomiting, diarrhoea, headaches, irritability and feeling weak which accompany the pain. Period pain can occur in normal healthy women and not related to any specific problems of the uterus or other organs in the pelvis. This is known as primary dysmenorrhoea. Period pain can also be caused by conditions such as fibroids, intra-uterine contraceptive devices and endometriosis. This is known as secondary dysmenorrhoea.

If period pain is extremely painful during the teenage years of a young lady, it is highly advised that she consult a specialist gynaecologist to determine if it is as a result of endometriosis. Endometriosis is a condition where tissue similar to the lining of the uterus is found elsewhere in the body. Endometriosis lesions can be found anywhere in the pelvic cavity : on the ovaries, the fallopian tubes, the pelvic sidewall, uterosacral ligaments, cul-de-sac, pouch of Douglas and in the rectal-vaginal septum. Endometriosis remains one of the most popular reasons for infertility and should be treated as early as possible.

Period pain is caused by activity of the hormone prostaglandin, produced in the uterus which causes the uterus to contract, thereby causing crampy pain. Period pain can be relieved by :

- a) medication :
 - The best way to relieve painful menstrual cramps is to take an anti-inflammatory medication;
 - Ibuprofen is one of the anti-inflammatory medications for the relief of period pain and inflammation;
- b) applying a heating pad to your abdominal area below the belly button;
- c) taking a warm shower or bath;
- d) drinking warm fluids;
- e) doing light circular massage with your fingertips around your lower abdomen;
- f) walking and exercising regularly;
- g) following a low fat, low salt, low sugar diet with no caffeine or alcohol;
- h) eating light but frequent meals.

WHAT GOD HATH PROMISED

*God hath not promised skies always blue
Flower-strewn pathways all our lives through
God hath not promised sun without rain
Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.*

*God hath not promised we shall not know
Toil and temptation, trouble and woe
He hath not told us we shall not bear
Many a burden, many a care.*



*God hath not promised smooth roads and wide
Swift, easy travel, needing no guide
Never a mountain, rocky and steep
Never a river, turbid and deep.*

*But God hath promised strength for the day
Rest from the labour, light for the way
Grace for the trials, help from above
Unfailing sympathy, undying love !*

Annie Johnson Flint

MICHIGAN WOMAN WITH 2 WOMBS DELIVERS TWINS

A Michigan woman with two wombs has given birth to twin daughters – one from each uterus. The Mining Journal and WLUC-tv report that Sarah Reinfelder's two healthy babies were delivered seven weeks premature Thursday by caesarean section at Marquette General Hospital



in the Upper Peninsula. The 21-year old Sault Ste. Marie woman has a condition known as uterus didelphys and doctors say such twin births are rare. The uteri are different sizes with the larger twin born from the larger uterus.

SECONDARY INFERTILITY

Secondary fertility is the condition where a woman who has had a baby struggles to conceive again or carry a baby to full term the second time around. Secondary fertility is a lot more common than people realize. Many couples who are battling to conceive a second child are not offered treatment options by their doctors as, after all, you have produced a child already. Telling you to keep trying can result in a lot of time wasted as nobody is investigating the problem.

The following can all hinder a successful conception and you might be suffering from one or more of the following issues : endometriosis, polycystic ovarian syndrome, blocked fallopian tubes, lower count or quality of your partner's sperm, hormonal imbalances, poor diet and stress. Whether you follow the fertility treatment route or a natural homeopathic route, secondary infertility can also consume a couple causing them to lose sight of the blessing of the child they already have !

<http://www.all4women.co.za>

VAGINAL DISCHARGE

Vaginal discharge changes throughout the month. Clear, elastic discharge is normally present at ovulation. Clear watery discharge occurs at various stages of your cycle, but can be heavier after exercising. Thick white discharge is usually present at the beginning and end of your cycle. If your discharge is yellow, green, clumpy or foul-smelling you might have an infection.

tips@healthmail.co.za

ANYWAY

People are often unreasonable, illogical and self-centered – forgive them anyway

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives – be kind anyway

If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true friends – succeed anyway

If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you – be honest and frank anyway

What you spend years building, someone could destroy anyway – build anyway

If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous – be happy anyway; and the good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow – do good anyway.

Give the world your best anyway. You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.



Mother Teresa

IMPACT OF MOTHER'S AND FATHER'S DAY ON COUPLES EXPERIENCING INFERTILITY

In May and June every year, people celebrate Mother's and Father's Day worldwide. Religious organizations such as churches generally celebrate the occasion with enthusiasm giving honour to mothers and fathers for the thankless job of being a parent. For couples that still hang on waiting for the miracle of a pregnancy, Mother's and Father's Day can be extremely painful.

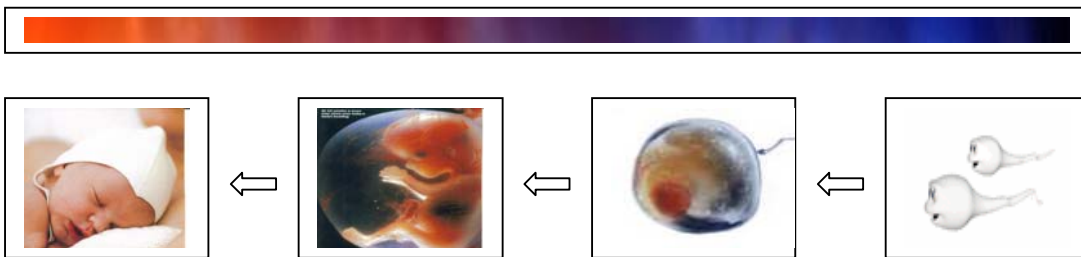
It is not unusual that a couple will opt not to attend church on that particular day as many churches request infertile couples to stand for prayer. If you have to stand year after year and still be in the situation of waiting for a breakthrough, you may be at the receiving end of sarcastic and judgemental remarks from others. While the gesture by the church is sincere, it may deepen the pain of the couple if the necessary support is lacking. A little sensitivity and patience will go a long way in this situation !

CONTACT ME ?



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THE INFERTILITY SUPPORT NETWORK (TISN)



"Infertility" refers to a situation where an individual / couple have been trying by natural means for more than 12 consecutive months to conceive a baby with no apparent success. Infertility can challenge any couple regardless of race, religion or age. The rollercoaster ride is emotionally, physically, spiritually, financially and mentally draining with little or no support on the journey. The stress, if not managed in a healthy way, can overwhelm a couple and cause a stable marriage to crumble !

The Infertility Support Network (TISN) is a **four** part service to an infertile couple to provide support and encouragement on a difficult journey :

1. **Firstly**, the website <http://www.infertility-support.org.za> contains comprehensive useful information regarding male / female infertility factors, options that are available to an infertile couple, useful reading / viewing material, testimonies from those that have walked the road of infertility and subsequently become parents, medical responses from an infertility specialist to questions from users etc.
2. **Secondly**, the circulation of a bi-monthly newsletter containing useful information on infertility related matters eg. adoption, fertility vitamins, male and female infertility factors, support group meetings etc.
3. **Thirdly**, the hosting of monthly support group meetings on the first Saturday of every month from 2-5pm with an infertility specialist present. Attendance is free;
4. **Fourthly**, the circulation of a message of encouragement every weekday evening to the cellphone of a person challenged by infertility.

If you have any queries or contributions in this regard, please do not hesitate to contact the founder of The Infertility Support Network (TISN), Krishnee Kissoonduth on 082 9555 572 or e-mail on krishnee@infertility-support.org.za.