

Fertility Concerns

A guide by PANDAS

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This guide is for any aspiring parent with questions about fertility. It aims to answer your questions about getting pregnant, and point you to trusted resources where you can find out more.

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Introduction

Deciding to have a baby can be a time of hope and excitement. But for many, the reality of trying to get pregnant can also be filled with worry and anxiety. If you have concerns about trying for a baby, or you or your partner's fertility, you are not alone. There are lots of resources available online to address the most common worries.

How long does it take to get pregnant?

There is no such thing as a 'normal' timeframe

The amount of time it takes to get pregnant varies significantly from person to person, with a few factors at play. Unfortunately, the longer it takes, the more pressure a couple can feel, and increased stress levels can make it even trickier to conceive.

According to [NHS Wales](#), if you are under 40 and have regular sex without contraception, there is an 8 in 10 chance of getting pregnant within a year.

To find out more: take a look at the NHS England guide; [How long does it usually take to get pregnant?](#)

What can help improve my chances of getting pregnant?

Taking folic acid and maintaining a healthy lifestyle

The NHS advises that it's a good idea for both you and your partner to take folic acid – a vitamin B supplement – while trying for a baby. Aside from this, other things you can do to improve your chances of getting pregnant include avoiding alcohol and smoking, and keeping to a healthy weight.

Find out more about ways you can increase your chances on the [NHS England](#), [Scotland](#), or [Wales](#) websites, and in this guide from the [National Institute of Health and Care Excellence](#). For a longer and more in depth look at all the things that can affect fertility, try [this guide from Patient.info](#).

To find out more: Try the [pregnancy planning tool](#) from pregnancy charity Tommy's for a quick way to get suggestions tailored to your lifestyle.



Cervical screening checks the health of your cervix (the opening to your womb from your vagina). It's a good idea to do this before getting pregnant.

Tommy's

What is infertility?

Difficulty getting pregnant after a year of regular unprotected sex

Some couples can struggle to conceive, despite having regular unprotected sex for a year or more. It's more common than you may realise, affecting around 1 in 7 couples according to [The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence \(NICE\)](#).

There are two types of infertility:

- **Primary infertility** – difficulty conceiving for someone who has never been pregnant before.
- **Secondary infertility** – struggling to conceive again after having one or more pregnancies in the past.

Infertility can be tough emotionally and physically, but support is available. If you've been trying for a while without success, speaking to a healthcare professional can help you understand your options.

To find out more: visit the [NHS guide to infertility](#), which covers possible causes and next steps.

What is a low sperm count or low motility?

Low sperm count means having fewer than 15 million sperm per millilitre of semen. Low motility means the sperm don't move effectively

A low sperm count means fewer sperm are available to fertilise an egg, while low motility makes it harder for sperm to reach the egg. Both conditions can reduce the chances of natural conception, but pregnancy is still possible.

There are many potential causes, including lifestyle factors, medical conditions, and hormonal imbalances. If you've been trying to conceive for over a year without success, ask your GP to check sperm health and discuss possible treatments.

To find out more: visit the [NHS guide on low sperm count](#) or [NICE's report on fertility problems](#).

Can age affect fertility?

Yes, fertility declines with age, especially after 35

As women and birthing people age, both the quantity and quality of their eggs decrease. This makes conception more challenging. For instance, while about 85 out of 100 women under 30 can conceive within a year, this drops to 44 out of 100 by age 40.

The [British Fertility Society \(BFS\)](#) found that men also experience a decline in fertility, typically starting around age 40 to 45, due to decreases in sperm quality and quantity.

If you're concerned about how age may be affecting your fertility, consult with a healthcare professional. They can provide guidance and discuss potential options to support your family planning journey.

To find out more: visit [Tommy's](#) to read about how age can affect fertility and pregnancy.

Can I still have a baby if I am infertile?

Yes, there are infertility treatments available and alternative ways to have a baby if you are infertile.

Infertility doesn't always mean the end of the journey to parenthood. Depending on your situation, fertility treatment may help.

The NHS and **BFS** list common fertility treatment options as:

- Medications
- Surgical Procedures
- Assisted Conception
- Donor Gametes or Embryos
- Lifestyle Modifications

Surrogacy or adoption could be other options. Each comes with emotional, medial and legal considerations, so speak to a specialist to help you choose the right path.

To find out more: visit the [British Fertility Society's guide](#) for detailed information on fertility treatments. Or visit Emma's Diary: [Alternative ways to have a baby](#)



The type of treatment you might need to help with a fertility problem depends entirely on the nature of the problem. What is right for one person may not be right for another.

British Fertility Society

What should I consider when having another baby?

Deciding if or when to have another baby is a personal choice with many factors to consider

Experts suggest waiting at least 18-23 months after giving birth before trying again. Shorter gaps between pregnancies may increase risks like premature birth. However, the right timing depends on your health, recovery, and personal circumstances.

Emotional readiness is just as important as physical health. Balancing the needs of your first child, financial stability, and your own well-being can all influence your decision. There's no perfect answer – what matters most is what feels right for you and your family.

To find out more: take a look at Patient.info's guide;
[How long to wait before your second baby](#)



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Thank you

Hope for Parents