

The Biological Clock: 5 Things Every Woman Should Know About Fertility and Age

The conversation around the biological clock often gets drowned in the noise of societal and political pressures. Amidst the demands on the woman to be all she can in her profession, family, and community, it can feel overwhelming to separate fact from fiction. It's okay if the chatter has left you feeling lost.

But wouldn't it be great if you knew with clarity how age affects your fertility (*if it does*) so you can make an informed decision? What if you could have explicit, evidence-based knowledge? In this blog post, we cast all politics aside and go deeper into the science of it: **is the biological clock accurate?** Should you be worried about dwindling fertility as you grow in age?

The goal of this blog is not to pile more pressure and confusion as influencers, opinion pieces, and well-meaning relatives may have inadvertently done. This post is your guide to factual insights about age and fertility so you can make clear decisions.



Learn the truth about:

- The connection between age and female fertility
- The complexities of egg quality and age
- The best time to get pregnant
- What to do if you're worried about your biological clock
- Answers to your most pressing questions about fertility and age

So, what are the five things you should know about your biological clock?

Fact #1: At Birth, You Had All The Eggs You'll Ever Have

Did you know that a female has almost 6 million eggs before birth? According to the [Cleveland Clinic](#), this number drops to 1 million at birth, which is still massive. By the time you hit puberty, you have about 300,000 eggs left. In short, current mainstream science holds that a woman never creates new eggs after birth.

Each month, [a woman loses about 500-1000 eggs](#) through ovulation. However, there are other ways a female loses the majority of eggs. One of them is a process called [atresia](#). Atresia in ovulation refers to a natural process where some immature eggs in a woman's ovaries don't fully develop and, instead of being released during ovulation, they break down and are reabsorbed by the body.

Knowing that your ovaries have a finite supply of eggs can help you make informed decisions about your fertility early enough. By menopause, eggs have declined almost to extinction. That means there's an optimal period where a woman has a higher chance of conceiving.

According to the [Conversation](#), by age 30, a woman has only 12% of eggs remaining.

Fact #2: Female Fertility Declines With Age

It's not only that a female is born with a finite number of eggs; the **ability to conceive also declines with age**. There are two main reasons for this:

- the declining number of eggs and;
- the declining quality of eggs.

We look at the latter in the next section.

Most medical professions quote the optimal time for conceiving from late teens to late 20s. The [American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists](#) says that after 30, female fertility starts to decline. At 35, this decline accelerates faster; by 45, the chances of conceiving naturally are minimal.

Apart from egg quantity and quality, other factors make it challenging to conceive with increased age. Reproductive issues like fibroids, endometriosis, and polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) are more prevalent as a woman ages. Such conditions complicate fertility.

You may wonder if there is a way to slow down fertility decline. [Researchers from Campbell University](#) report that currently, there's no known way to slow down the decline of eggs. The [British Fertility Society](#) says that fertility decline happens even if you are healthy and fit.



However, there are a couple of ways you can increase the chances of pregnancy, especially if you're still under 40:

- Have sex regularly (every 2-3 days) without using protection or contraception
- Match sexual intercourse with your [ovulation days](#)
- Eat a healthy diet and keep off smoking and heavy drinking

If you are approaching 35 and have been trying to get pregnant for a year, it would be best to see a gynecologist practitioner.

Fact #3: Egg Quality Also Declines With Age

A woman at 50 could be able to conceive because she still has about 1000 eggs remaining. However, creating at 50 is different because, by this age, the eggs have also deteriorated in quality.

The whole concept of **declining egg quality** is still under research. However, one plausible reason is that chromosomal abnormalities are more likely with age. For you to have a healthy

embryo and, ultimately, a healthy child, the eggs should have the right balance of chromosomes.

A typical and healthy human cell has **26 pairs of chromosomes**. However, as a woman ages, the eggs could have missing or extra chromosomes, which could cause congenital disabilities and miscarriages.

With lower egg quality, it can take a woman longer to conceive. Women are now considering ways to preserve egg quality until they're ready for childbearing.

Egg freezing is a procedure for preserving egg quality by collecting and freezing them until a later day. You can learn more about [egg freezing, its success, and the risks](#) on the Human Fertilization and Embryology Authority resource page.

Fact #4: There is an Optimal Window for Conceiving

From a biological perspective, your late teens up to late twenties are the most optimal age to conceive. However, other critical factors affect when you can get a child. For example, even though age 20 is ideal for creating, you may need a job to access nutritious food and provide for the child.

According to an Upsala Journal of Medical Sciences paper, an average woman aged 20-24 has an [85% chance of conceiving](#). Most women at this age are completing college and looking for a job.



Theoretically, you could get pregnant at any time before menopause hits, but the most optimal is in your 20s. It's essential to note that age is not the only thing that affects fertility. [12 in 100](#) couples try to conceive without success each year, regardless of age.

Your health also affects the ideal time to conceive. The best strategy is to talk to your doctor so they can help lay out all the options available for you. If you are ready to conceive in your earlier years, you should take the chance so you can increase the likelihood of a healthy pregnancy.

Fact #4: A Fertility Specialist can Help You Navigate Fertility and Age

There's so much information available, but a fertility specialist can help you sift through it and give you a personalized answer. Some people struggle to conceive even when the biological clock is not ticking. Others have gone ahead to conceive healthy babies in their late thirties and forties.

Many women live through anxiety because of ideas shared on the internet and pressure from society. Sometimes, you only need an objective perspective from a caring but qualified professional. If you want to have children now or in the future, talking to a specialist can help clarify some things.



Here are four specific ways a fertility specialist can help you:

- **Education and Counseling:** Fertility specialists can provide you with a comprehensive understanding of the biological clock. They can explain the factors affecting fertility and help you separate facts from myths.

- **Assessing Your Fertility:** Tests can provide real-time information to guide your decision. To get this information, fertility experts do tests such as ultrasound scans and hormone tests.
- **Offering Customized Advice:** General information, like this blog, may not apply to your specific circumstances. A fertility specialist can factor in your age, goals, and health to guide you on the best path to conceiving, now or later.
- **Laying Out Options:** Whether in your early 20s or late 40s, a fertility specialist can help you understand your options, from egg-freezing to IVF.