



Becoming pregnant may be a lot harder than what we once thought. Back in the 1980s when MTV videos were totally awesome, women were also being told they could have it all. Want a professional career first and then get pregnant in your in your 30s and 40s? No problem.

What a skewed message this turned out to be, right?

Here's what we learned about infertility since those days of punk rock.

The Infertility Sirens

The medical community is ringing the fertility alarm bells. As early as 2012 The United Kingdom medical community was pushing to have sex education cover fertility, since 1 in 5 are likely to experience it.

In high school and even in the lower grades, girls should know that their fertility is not a lifetime guarantee and while that message is getting out

more and more, it's still not reaching every girl or young woman.

But, what a change this is from the 1980s and early 1990s when women were told they could have it all.

However, women are still hoping to have babies in their 30s and early 40s and sure, there are women who end up having their babies at that age with no fertility assistance. But the truth of the matter is most women are not that lucky and need expensive and time-consuming medical intervention to achieve a pregnancy. Later-in-life pregnancies are not so easy.

At the end of the day, fertility is finite for both sexes, but it's especially true for women, as women are born with the eggs they will have for life. By 40 years of age, the egg reserve and quality have declined significantly. Men are producing new sperm all the time.

The Fertility Percentage Breakdown

Infertility can and does impact all ages and for many different reasons.

Women in their 20s have the best chance of getting pregnant with a monthly percent ratio up to 25 percent chance of conceiving. The best age range is early to mid-20s. Once a woman starts celebrating her 30-something years, this percentage drops to 15 to 20 percent per month. However, once she reaches 35 years of age, her fertility will start to decline even more.

While the media buzz says 40 is the new 20, it's not so in the fertility medical journals. Infertility drops to five percent or less every month. For those over 45 years of age, the chances of getting pregnant drops to a few percent less.

It's Time for The Talk

Now that we know women may not be able to "have it all" in their late 30s and 40s, it's time for the talk. Yes, while men's fertility declines with age, it just doesn't compare to what women will endure as they mature. Because of this, women need to be educated on their fertility and fertility preservation.

An example of fertility preservation is egg freezing. While this isn't a guarantee and has a price tag of \$10,000, it's still something to consider for women in their 20s and 30s who are not ready to have their family.

Egg retrieval is a minor medical procedure, and it's an option for women particularly in their early 20s who are at a prime physical age for "high reserve and high-quality eggs."

A woman at 23 may have just finished college and wants to focus on her career or backpack through Europe. Having a baby is the last thing on her mind. So, egg freezing may very well be something to ponder.

It's also an option for women in their 30s as their egg reserve and quality may still be sufficient to make it worth it to attempt the procedure.

There's More Than Meets the Eye

When celebrities in their 30s and 40s celebrate a pregnancy or a birth of a baby, some may be open about infertility challenges. But others may not. For those celebrities who want their privacy protected, people who read about their



baby announcements have no idea what went on in the background for them to get pregnant. A woman in her 40s likely used an egg donor.

While these older female celebrities take such great care of themselves, this has no impact on their fertility. Exercise and a healthy body mass index do not help fertility for women in their 30s and 40s.

Protecting Fertility Now, Not Later

During the last ten years, doctors are talking more about infertility issues in women and how they can safeguard their future fertility.

One major discovery is how an STI (sexually transmitted infections) can kill fertility.

In fact, STIs can trigger infertility in women more than men.

One example of this is chlamydia which is a silent infection for women. On the other hand, men experience the symptoms of chlamydia and get it treated. However, they might be embarrassed and not tell their female partner who can be faced with an untreated case of chlamydia.

Yep, what you were told is true: Always use a condom. Polyurethane and latex condoms help prevent pregnancy and the transfer of STIs. However, lambskin condoms only help in preventing pregnancy, not STI transmission.

It's so important for women that are sexually active with more than one partner or a new partner to undergo regular STI medical tests. If an OB/GYN doesn't offer it, demand it.

And even though someone is married, don't assume that's a STI free pass either. Women need to empower themselves to protect their future fertility no matter their relationship status.

About Stephanie Caballero, Esq.

Stephanie M. Caballero is the founder of <u>The Surrogacy Law Center, PLC</u>, headquartered in Carlsbad, California. Her firm has represented more than 3,500 clients, including intended parents, surrogates and egg donors from all over the world through surrogacy and egg, sperm, and embryo donation arrangements.

Stephanie's expertise in family formation and reproductive law has made her a sought-after expert, and she has appeared on various programs and in print media including the Today Show, Access Hollywood, ABC News, HuffPost, MarketWatch, The Hollywood Reporter, The Daily Beast, Fox News, the Los Angeles Times, L.A. Daily Journal and more. Stephanie had her own eight-year journey through infertility and finally realized her dream of having children when a surrogate carried her twins.

