

# HEALTH

## Get to the Bottom of Fertility Problems

More than 7 million people in the U.S.—roughly 12 percent of the reproductive-age population—struggle with infertility, the inability to conceive after six months to a year of unprotected sex. Infertility can make the journey to having a child a frustrating and confusing one. Fortunately, many people who are treated for fertility problems are able to conceive after therapy.

Infertility affects men and women nearly equally. About one-third of cases can be attributed to the male partner, one-third are related to the female partner, and the remainder are caused by a combination of problems with both partners or by unknown factors.

In women, increasing age, irregu-



### For Your Health

BY DR. RICHARD N. WALDMAN

lar ovulation (release of eggs from the ovaries), abnormal anatomy, or scarring or blockages in the fallopian tubes are the main causes of infertility. Gynecologic conditions, such as polycystic ovary syndrome, endometriosis, and fibroids, can also make it difficult for a woman to conceive. Lifestyle factors such as smoking, eating a poor diet, or being underweight, overweight, or obese may also make it harder to get pregnant.

Male fertility also declines with

age, but at a slower rate. Infertility in men usually involves problems with the sperm. Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) or an injury to the testicles, such as overheating (from spending too much time in a hot tub, for example) or a reaction to medication, can lead to short term fertility issues.

If you are having trouble getting pregnant, see your ob-gyn. Your doctor may order tests to understand what is causing the problem. You may also be referred to a doctor

who specializes in infertility (reproductive endocrinologist) or other counselors and specialists.

Standard fertility testing for women includes a physical exam and a health history survey that focuses on menstrual function and a woman's history of pregnancy, STDs, and birth control use. Blood and urine samples may be analyzed to confirm that normal ovulation is taking place. X-rays or ultrasounds may be used to view and inspect the reproductive organs for any abnormalities. To test for male fertility, a semen sample will be checked for the number, shape, and movement of the sperm and for signs of infection.

Infertility can be treated in a variety of ways depending on the

cause. If you are overweight or obese, losing weight may improve your chances of getting pregnant. Medications that stimulate the ovaries or regulate blood insulin levels (which can interfere with ovulation) may be prescribed. Your doctor can also help you decide if surgery or assisted reproductive therapies, such as in vitro fertilization, are right for you.

For more information, the ACOG Patient Education Pamphlets "Evaluating Infertility" and "Treating Infertility" are available in English and Spanish at [acog.org/publications](http://acog.org/publications).

*Dr. Richard N. Waldman is president of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.*

**Leg Alert Screening** -- Check for peripheral arterial disease with this safe, simple screening using ankle and arm blood pressure. The fee is \$40. To schedule an appointment, call 503-251-6137.

**Smoke-Free Support Group** -- Meets Mondays, 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. For information, call 503-256-4000.

**Heart Talk Support Group** -- Meets on the second Monday of each month; from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. For more information, call 503-251-6260.

**Family Caregiver Support Group** -- This topic-oriented group offers a safe place to discuss the stresses, challenges and rewards of providing care to an older relative or friend. Meets the first Thursday of each month at 3 p.m. at Legacy Good Samaritan Hospital.

**Chronic Pain Support Group** -- Meets the first Wednesday at 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. and the third Wednesday of each month, from 7 p.m.

to 8:30 p.m. For more information, call 503-256-4000.

**Abdominal Aneurysm Screening** -- Free 10 minute health screenings to detect a deadly vascular condition -- called abdominal aortic aneurysm will be offered for Portland-area residents on Saturday, Feb 5 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Kmart pharmacy in Tualatin. Advance registration is required by calling 866-371-3592.

**Mind Body Health Class** -- Learn and practice techniques to help you improve your mood, health and wellbeing, including effective ways to manage difficult emotions and chronic stress or illness. Registration is \$70 for Kaiser Permanente members and \$95 for nonmembers. Call 503-286-6816.

**Red Cross Certification** -- The Oregon Trail Chapter Red Cross now offers credits to

helps professionals maintain licensing or certification. For a cumulative list, visit [pdxinfo.net](http://pdxinfo.net).

**Weight Loss Help** -- Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) meetings are held every Wednesday from 8:45 to 10 a.m. at the Hollywood Senior Center, 1820 N.E. 40th Ave. Anyone interested is invited to visit and learn more. For details, call 503-287-0731.

**Cardiac-Rehab Exercises** -- A medically supervised exercise program for people dealing with heart conditions. For information, call 503-251-6260.

**Stroke Alert Screening** -- Check your carotid arteries with a painless ultrasound to assess your risk. Fee \$40. To schedule a screening, call 503-251-6137.

**Managing Chronic Hepatitis C** -- Third Wednesday of each month at 5 p.m. The

informative session is led by a registered nurse to help you manage side effects of medications and dosage preparations and administration; doctor referral required. To register, call 503-251-6313.

**Better Breathers** -- An asthma educational support group meets on the 1st Tuesday of the month from 1:15 p.m. to 2:45 p.m. at Adventist Medical Center. For information, call 503-251-6830.

**Empowerment through Relaxation** -- Free informal meditation classes that address breathing techniques, some gentle ancient African yoga poses and mental balancing techniques. People have left these classes joyful and with a peaceful view of their lives. Call Dr. Marcelitte Failla at 503-228-6140.

**Tenderfoot Care** -- Treat your feet with a soak, nail trim, buffing and massage from a licensed nurse at one of six clinics or at your home. Call 503-251-6303 for more information.

## HEALTH WATCH

### Attention Small Business Owners

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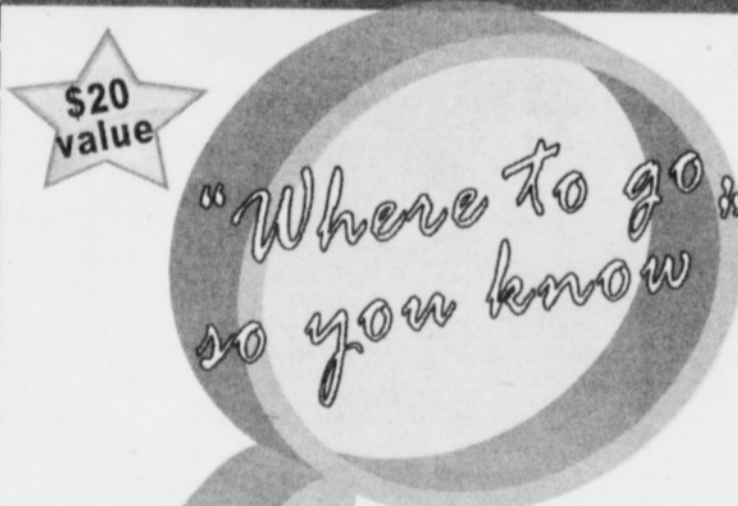
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## Take Action. Get Tested!



Multnomah County Health Department's HIV Community Test Site offers **confidential** HIV testing with or without your name at these locations:

### Downtown Community Test Site

Call 503.988.3775 for an appt.

Mon | Thurs | Fri

426 SW Stark St., 6th Floor,  
Portland, 97204

### Northeast Health Center

Just walk in

Tuesdays | 5:30 - 7:15 pm

5329 NE MLK Jr. Blvd, 2nd Floor,  
Portland, 97211

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Se habla español: other interpretation by appointment.