



Do You Want To Delay Motherhood?

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We are aware that women are born with a fixed number of eggs in their ovaries. However, the quantity and quality of eggs declines with increasing age, especially after 35 years of age and the best quality eggs are available when a woman is in her 20's. But in today's world, when more and more women are becoming independent, career oriented and entrepreneurs, managing both work and home, pregnancy and motherhood tends to take a backseat.

Modern age women want to delay pregnancy and motherhood till they are a little more settled in life, so as to do justice to both work and family. Hence, in such cases, thanks to technological advances, the option of egg freezing comes to the rescue of women who don't want to conceive in their younger years.

With this technique, women can be their own egg donors for IVF (in-vitro fertilization) later on. And though the earlier success rate of egg freezing weren't good, due to methods used to freeze them, the advances in technology, has completely revolutionized the IVF treatment and its success rates and at a later time, these eggs can be thawed and used for IVF. The rapid freezing of eggs is called vitrification.

Indications For Egg Freezing

◆ **Medical reasons** - When a woman is undergoing cancer treatment such as radiation or chemotherapy. It may have an irreversible impact on her ovaries, hence she can opt for egg freezing.

- ◆ **Personal reasons** - When women want to delay pregnancy.
- ◆ When a woman wants to avoid freezing surplus embryos after IVF, specially in cases of unstable relationships, when she is not sure that her relationship will continue with the male partner or not. Then, she should opt for egg freezing rather than embryo freezing.

Procedure (Egg Freezing)

Women who opt for egg freezing are given some drugs to stimulate the ovaries. The eggs are collected and are processed in the lab and then vitrified and cryo-preserved. At a later date, when the woman wants to use her eggs, it is thawed and fertilized with her husband's sperms in a culture media or ICSI is done. After fertilization the embryo is transferred to the mother's womb.



Egg freezing comes to the rescue of women who don't want to conceive in their younger years

This procedure became more popular when it was offered as a part of a package to female employees of *Apple* and *Facebook* and recently when former *Miss World* Diana Hayden conceived (eight years later) with her eggs that were frozen.

Earlier the results with egg freezing were not very good as slow freezing was practiced which used to form ice crystals in the eggs, increasing the water content in the eggs. However, the changing technology, vitrification or fast freezing has eliminated the risk of ice formation and this has set good success rates with egg freezing.

Advantages/Success Rate Of Egg Freezing

Egg freezing has taken over embryo freezing as it provides liberty to girls and even to unmarried ladies to freeze their eggs - It instils a sense of security, freedom and insurance as well. It is freedom from social obligations of quick pregnancy and early marriage and

it gives women more liberty to make their own decisions with regard to their bodies.

The success rates of IVF vary between 30-40 per cent. However, it is a kind of insurance which one may not use, but it definitely provides some confidence that you have your eggs safely kept away, in spite of your increasing age and you may utilize them later when you have naturally exhausted them.



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