

PHOENIX

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Fertility Options Provide

New Hope

At Southwest Fertility Center

FERTILITY OPTIONS

Provide New Hope

THE NUMBER OF couples experiencing difficulty conceiving is as high as one in 10. For those patients hoping to avoid fertility problems in the future — whether due to a desire to delay parenthood until later in life or due to cancer treatments that may have a negative impact on fertility — the Southwest Fertility Center offers fertility preservation techniques that are providing new hope.

A 2009 study released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services revealed that the average age at which women in the United States give birth to their first child has increased from 21.4 years of age in 1970 to 25 years of age in 2006. As fertility issues are frequently linked to age, the later couples wait to have children, the more likely they are unable to conceive.

“The biological clock waits for nobody,” says Sujatha Gunnala, M.D., Medical Director for Southwest Fertility Center.

As a woman ages, the quantity and quality of oocytes diminish and chances for successful conception go down — drastically after age 35. Young women who are postponing childbearing for career or personal reasons can consider egg freezing to preserve fertility.

Although egg freezing is still an experimental procedure that is more complicated than embryo freezing or sperm freezing, members of the care team at Southwest Fertility Center work diligently to deliver successful results for patients who could benefit from this service. The Southwest Fertility Center offers a full continuum of egg freezing services, including harvesting, freezing and storage. Southwest Fertility Center’s birth rate for frozen embryo transfer cycles continues to be one of the highest in the nation.

“Fertility preservation by way of oocyte freezing is a good option for women faced with cancer treatments like chemotherapy or radiation therapy, as well as for women without a partner who would like to have children in the future,” says Dr. Gunnala. “We have received institutional review board approval for our egg freezing technique, and we’re confident that this option will prove to be very useful for those patients who are good candidates.”

Addressing Cancer Patients’ Options

Because of scientific advancements in the management of



Since 1980, the Southwest Fertility Center team has helped more than 25,000 couples bring home healthy babies.

cancer, there has been a significant improvement in cancer survival rates, and many cancer survivors, including young breast cancer survivors, are faced with infertility following chemotherapy or radiation therapy. While Dr. Gunnala and her staff at Southwest Fertility Center understand that quick action must be taken to ensure the safety of a cancer patient, they encourage physicians to mention the possibility of egg or sperm freezing to patients whose condition would allow the delay of chemotherapy or radiation therapy for a short interval.

“Cancer affects men and women of all ages, and the possibility of not being able to have biological children following lifesaving cancer treatment is absolutely devastating to some people,” says Max Wijnberg, M.S., embryologist and Lab Supervisor for Southwest Fertility Center. “Due to our recent development with egg freezing, we are now able to offer this service to preserve fertility for both males *and* females.”

“I am not an oncologist, and I am fully aware that when you’re dealing with a patient who might not survive, to address fertility would be very difficult or perhaps impossible,” says Dr. Gunnala. “However, with a team approach involving oncologists, surgeons, reproductive endocrinologists and infertility specialists, in selective patients, fertility preservation may be considered and implemented.”

For the most positive outcomes, physicians should allow two weeks for male patients for the collection of adequate sperm samples to be cryopreserved. In female patients, the egg freezing process takes two to six weeks for completion. The ovaries are stimulated with hormones to mature multiple eggs, and oocytes are harvested from the ovaries by in-office transvaginal ultrasound-guided follicle aspiration. Oocytes are cryopreserved and stored. For women who have a male partner available, oocytes are fertilized with sperm and embryos are cryopreserved and stored. Because this process delays the treatment of cancer,



EASING STRESS AND ANXIETY

AT SOUTHWEST FERTILITY CENTER, each patient has a name and a unique situation — no patient is ever just a number. By building personal relationships, staff members can help patients express and address their concerns.

“Because we are a small office, each staff member knows the couple who is going through treatment very well,” says Max Wijnberg, M.S., embryologist and Lab Supervisor for Southwest Fertility Center. “In many cases, couples are going through a great deal of stress, and family members may not even know what they’re experiencing. Having a personable staff to talk to is very helpful in those situations.”

In addition to providing counseling, delivering educational lectures and facilitating open communication, members of the care team at Southwest Fertility Center may also recommend alternative methods for stress relief.

“The psychological aspect of going through fertility treatments is very important,” says Sujatha Gunnala, M.D., Medical Director for Southwest Fertility Center. “Because of this, we direct our patients to seek counseling, acupuncture and other methods that can help alleviate stress.”

physicians are encouraged to discuss this option with their patients and refer them to the Southwest Fertility Center as quickly as possible. Patients need to know they may not be candidates for delaying cancer treatments.

The Future of In Vitro Fertilization

For patients who opt to utilize egg or sperm freezing services at Southwest Fertility Center, the next step to becoming pregnant will likely involve in vitro fertilization and intracytoplasmic sperm injection. A process that once caused a high chance of multiples, the science has evolved to reduce this risk.

“We are currently exploring single-embryo transfer,” says Dr. Gunnala. “By limiting the number of embryos, we reduce a couple’s chance of multiple births. In the future, we hope that new techniques will be developed to allow us to study embryos in a dish and select the healthiest embryo to further limit complications associated with these procedures.”

The History of the Center

Since 1980, Southwest Fertility Center’s experienced, enthusiastic team members have helped more than 25,000 couples battling infertility bring home healthy babies. Physicians can take comfort in knowing patients referred to Southwest Fertility Center will receive care from a highly qualified team that displays an immense dedication to its specialty and the families it serves.

By staying abreast of advances and offering new services such as egg freezing, the practice continues to grow. Recently, Dr. Gunnala was pleased to introduce a new associate, Dr. Linda Nelson, board-certified reproductive endocrinologist and OB/GYN to the team.

Fertility treatments at Southwest Fertility Center involve a comprehensive approach using medical, surgical and assisted reproductive techniques. The Southwest Fertility Center makes

DONOR EGG PROGRAM

IN CONJUNCTION WITH offering oocyte freezing, Southwest Fertility Center also offers a donor egg program.

Southwest Fertility Center provides donor eggs to couples who have been unable to conceive using their own eggs for reasons such as decreased ovarian reserve, premature ovarian failure or certain X-linked genetic disorders. Donor eggs have provided good success rates.

Southwest Fertility Center welcomes healthy women between the ages of 18 and 28 to become egg donors. Eligibility is determined upon screening and testing, and donors are financially compensated upon completion of procedures.

For more information about the requirements for egg donors, visit www.southwestfertilitycenter.com or call (602) 956-7481.

ELIGIBILITY FOR EGG FREEZING

- + Women younger than 37
- + Women with normal ovarian reserve function
- + Young women faced with cancer chemotherapy or radiation
- + Women faced with surgical removal of their ovaries
- + Young women who desire to preserve their fertility options for the future
- + Women undergoing in vitro fertilization who wish to preserve extra oocytes prior to fertilization

For more information about the requirements for egg freezing, visit www.southwestfertilitycenter.com or call (602) 956-7481.



Oocytes (eggs) are cryopreserved (frozen) and stored on site at Southwest Fertility Center.





LINDA NELSON, M.D., PH.D. JOINS SOUTHWEST FERTILITY CENTER

DR. LINDA NELSON, board-certified reproductive endocrinologist and OB/GYN, is excited to join Southwest Fertility Center from her prior position as associate professor and medical director of the in vitro fertilization program at the University of Kansas Medical Center. Dr. Nelson has been active in reproductive endocrinology practice as well as in clinical research and teaching of residents and students for the past 15 years.

Having received her Ph.D. in psychology, Dr. Nelson continues to be interested in the effects of stress on infertility and women's health. Her research focuses on the role of stress in the ovarian response to ovulation. She encourages easing stress and anxiety as an important consideration in infertility patient care. Dr. Nelson participates in all aspects of reproductive endocrinology and offers a full spectrum of treatments.

FULL-SERVICE TREATMENT PLANS

SOUTHWEST FERTILITY CENTER offers a wide range of options to maximize a couple's chances for conception. While every treatment plan is developed based upon specific needs, a patient referred to the Southwest Fertility Center may receive:

- + ovulation induction medications
- + intrauterine insemination
- Assisted reproductive technologies:**
- + in vitro fertilization
- + intracytoplasmic sperm injection
- + assisted hatching
- + embryo freezing
- + fertility preservation — egg freezing
- + sperm freezing
- + pre-implantation genetic diagnosis
- + sperm donor program
- + egg donor program

Reproductive surgery:

- + laser laparoscopy surgery for severe endometriosis and pelvic adhesions
- + tubal reanastomosis
- + ovarian diathermy (in PCO patients, when needed)
- + myomectomies
- + operative hysteroscopy for correction of uterine septum, uterine synechiae and removal of submucosal fibroids

available the most innovative and effective treatment methods for any couple having problems with fertility — and unlike other centers, Southwest Fertility Center never rejects a patient for fear that low chances for conception will affect the appearance of their success rates.

“I don't reject any patient unless it's literally impossible for her to conceive,” says Dr. Gunnala. “Pregnancy rates depend on each couple's unique situation, not on a center's numbers.”

When a couple is referred to Southwest Fertility Center, both parties undergo comprehensive testing to determine the cause of fertility problems. It is estimated that around one-third of fertility issues occur because of women's problems, another one-third can be attributed to men and the remaining one-third may be caused by both parties, so addressing any underlying issues that exist on either side is imperative.

“Many fertility clinics may quickly move their patients from simple medical treatments to high-tech treatments, and present in vitro fertilization as their only option, but the vast majority of fertility issues can be traced back to underlying medical conditions,” says Dr. Gunnala. “We strive to pinpoint those problems and correct them. At Southwest Fertility Center, we believe that reproductive surgery has an important role in the management of infertile couples. Often following surgeries, our patients conceive quickly. We offer all aspects of assisted reproductive techniques and treatments to our patients when needed.”

Treatment is individualized for each couple and is tailored to meet their specific needs. Additionally, each couple is monitored closely throughout both the evaluation and treatment processes to ensure optimal effectiveness. This comprehensive approach to infertility care has allowed Southwest Fertility Center's pregnancy rates to remain competitive with the national average.

Egg freezing is one of the most promising fertility preservation options available to women to date. This new advanced promising procedure, in conjunction with our successful in vitro fertilization and frozen embryos transfer rate, encourages us to look forward to continued high pregnancy and birth rates in the future at Southwest Fertility Center.

For more information about services provided at Southwest Fertility Center, call (602) 956-7481 or visit www.southwestfertilitycenter.com.

SOUTHWEST FERTILITY CENTER LOCATIONS

Phoenix Office

3125 N 32nd Street, Suite 200
Phoenix, AZ 85018
Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday

Mesa Office

1520 S. Dobson Rd., Suite 215
Mesa, AZ 85202
Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday

www.southwestfertilitycenter.com

E-mail: ivf@southwestfertilitycenter.com
Telephone: (602) 956-7481
Fax: (602) 956-7591