

What couples considering IVF need to know

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(HealthDay)—In vitro fertilization (IVF) is widely used in the United States to help infertile couples have children. But there are a number of things people should know when considering it, an infertility specialist

says.

"Many factors ... can affect the success of an IVF cycle, but many people view IVF as their safety net that ensures they can have a child anytime," said Dr. Rashmi Kudesia. She specializes in [reproductive endocrinology](#) and [infertility](#) at Houston Methodist in Texas.

For women using their own eggs, the success rate drops to less than 15% in the early 40s and to less than 5% by the mid-40s, she pointed out.

"That doesn't mean IVF won't work for these couples, but they should know success varies based on age," Kudesia said in a medical center news release.

In addition, IVF success rates vary widely depending on the clinic, she noted, but all clinics are required to report that information to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. As patients make [treatment decisions](#), Kudesia suggested that they use the CDC's online tool to compare clinics.

"Two of the most common questions couples ask when starting IVF are about their chances of ending up with multiple babies and how uncomfortable the process will be," she said.

"There is a perception that any type of assistance with fertility leads to having multiple babies with one pregnancy. With IVF, we increasingly only implant one embryo at a time, so you'd only end up with twins or more if the embryo naturally splits," Kudesia explained.

And, she added that most women have two weeks of difficult symptoms while they take hormones to help eggs grow, but after that, the rest of the process should be more comfortable.

"IVF is an incredibly powerful technology that has given many couples

the opportunity to be parents," Kudesia said. "But it isn't a journey that anyone should enter into unprepared. Anyone facing infertility and considering IVF should talk to their ob-gyn and a reproductive endocrinologist to review all of their fertility treatment options."

Infertility affects one in eight couples in the United States.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has an online tool with information on [fertility clinics' services and success rates](#).

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