

## Busting myths around pregnancy in your 40s and motherhood

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It can be quite stressful for aspiring parents over 40 to ascertain if their age can impact the conceiving process. Dr Shivani Sachdev Gour, MBBS, MD- obstetrics and gynaecology, DNB- medical genetics, resolves some queries on the same.

There's a common notion that fertility rate for people over 40 is low. If someone wants to conceive at this age, how should they proceed?

There is a progressive fall in fertility in both females and males with advancing age. For couples planning to conceive at this age, it is advisable to get a preconceptional counselling with their clinician as early as possible. With timely and appropriate counselling, patients can be screened for any abnormalities and deficiencies, and appropriate measures can be taken to modify their risk factors, lifestyle, and diet.

Please tell us about the changes that one should incorporate in their diet and about the IVF process for people above 40

A healthy outside starts from the inside. Decline in fertility with age is accentuated if it is associated with unhealthy eating habits leading to being obese or overweight. Couples planning for pregnancy should consume proteins in the form of beans, legumes, lean meat, fish and complex carbohydrates like whole grains with plenty of fibres. High intake of folate, mono-polyunsaturated fats, iron, nuts and vegetables is essential. The IVF process involves a series of steps which include preconceptional counselling followed by investigations for both partners. Then a treatment plan is devised for the patients.

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