

Myths

Facts

## MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT FERTILITY

### What is fertility?

Simply put, fertility is a person's ability to conceive children. However, it is a complex and often misunderstood topic, and myths abound around it. It is essential to identify these popular misconceptions and educate people with scientific truths, separating fact from fiction when it comes to reproductive health. Read on to find out about some of the common myths and the facts that belie them.

### "It's not possible to get pregnant after 35"

This is one of the most common myths about fertility. It is believed that fertility declines sharply after 35, making pregnancy nearly impossible. While one cannot deny that there is an element of truth in this as fertility declines with age, it is equally true that many women over 35 can conceive naturally or with medical assistance. While egg quality and quantity is affected with age, advances in reproductive technology like IVF have made a difference, helping countless women conceive well into their late 30s and early 40s.

As mentioned, while fertility declines as women age, it doesn't mean that pregnancy won't happen. With a healthy lifestyle, proper medical care, and fertility treatment there are always good chances of a woman conceiving at any age.

### "Men can father children at any age"

This is another widely propagated and believed myth – the belief that men don't experience fertility decline with age. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is true that men produce sperm throughout their lives, but the quality and quantity suffer, making it difficult to father offspring. Older age leads to lower testosterone levels, reduced semen volume, and an increased risk of genetic abnormalities in sperm.

Indeed, men's fertility does decrease with age, particularly after 40. Sperm quality can decline, and the risk of birth defects increases. However, where they differ from women is that fertility in men does not have a sharp cutoff age, but declines gradually.

### "Women can't get pregnant during their period"

Again, this is a widely held belief that is entirely a myth. While most people believe that a woman cannot get pregnant during menstruation, this is not true. This is because sperm can survive in the



reproductive tract for up to five days and if a woman has a short cycle, ovulation can occur soon after her period when the sperm is still viable.

So, understanding the menstrual cycle is crucial for conception. Tracking ovulation and understanding cycle variations can help in both preventing and achieving pregnancy.

### "Infertility is Always a Woman's Issue"

Not just gender-biased but totally false – that's what this widely prevalent myth is. While women are often blamed for infertility, in reality, men and women can equally be to blame. In fact, in about 40% of infertility cases, male factors contribute to difficulties in conception.

Fertility issues can be caused by factors in either partner, and both partners' health needs to be scrutinised and treated to increase chances of conception.

### The real picture

As can be understood by now, debunking myths and embracing facts is key to tackling infertility. At Genome, we do our bit to spread knowledge and dispel commonly held falsehoods. Seeking medical advice, maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and understanding the biological processes involved can improve the chances of conception.