

Dealing with a diagnosis of infertility

You are not alone in feeling a wide range of emotions if you are facing an infertility diagnosis or treatment. Common reactions include grief, anger, hopelessness, frustration, and loss of self-esteem.

Many people experiencing infertility say that they feel their lives are taken over. Research has shown that infertility is comparable to major illness, loss of a loved one, job loss, or divorce in terms of the impact it can have on our lives -- emotionally, physically, financially, and in our relationships.

Many people will experience different emotions at different points in the process, and it's not uncommon for partners to feel differently.

Practicing empathy and acceptance with yourself and your partner can be helpful in coping with the emotional side of this process.

While undergoing diagnosis or treatment for infertility, it is important to find support or outlets in ways that feel right to you.

In-person or online support groups – This can be a very valuable resource because you can find people who understand what you are going through.

Private counseling – Many health benefit plans offer some coverage for counseling. Ask around in your community to find a counselor who is familiar with infertility and the many issues involved.

Self-care - Finding moments of enjoyment can help give you the strength and stamina to continue on what can be a long process of testing and treatment. Whether it's making time for creative outlets, your favourite sports, or quality time with your loved ones, taking care of yourself or letting others care for you is essential.

Sexual contact- Dealing with infertility can take a toll on a couple's sex life for many reasons. Try to remember that sex has many benefits aside from reproduction – as a source of pleasure, intimacy, connection, excitement, and as a way of expressing caring and love.

DECISION: DO I WANT TREATMENT FOR INFERTILITY?

Being an empowered fertility patient means knowing all your options. Choosing not to have fertility treatment is one of the options. You may go through a number of treatments and then decide the "next level" of treatment is something you don't want. Or you may choose not to try medical treatment at all.

* What is your reason for making this decision? _____

* When do you need to make a decision? _____

* How far along are you with making a choice?

I have not yet thought about the options

I am thinking about the options

I am close to making a choice

I have already made a choice

* Overall, how much does being childless affect your quality of life?

not at all

slightly

moderately

a great deal

* What is your preferred option right now?

Seek assessment: ask my primary care provider to start this process immediately

No action at this time: I accept whatever happens.

Not sure: I still need to discuss this with my partner, care providers and other trusted sources. I will set a time limit for this decision, understanding that age is a factor in fertility treatment.