



## **A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC**

### ***Help for Infertility***

*National Infertility Awareness Week, April 23-29, 2017*

Recorded: April 25, 2017; posted: April 27, 2017

*[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

[Dr. Moore] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Latetia Moore.

For many couples, having a child is a shared dream. Unfortunately, fertility problems can shatter that dream.

Dr. Sheree Boulet is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. She's joining us today to discuss the problem of infertility among couples in the U.S. Welcome to the show, Sheree.

[Dr. Boulet] Thank you.

[Dr. Moore] Sheree, what is the definition of infertility?

[Dr. Boulet] In general, infertility is defined as not being able to get pregnant after at least one year of trying. And we know that fertility in women declines steadily with age, so sometimes providers evaluate and treat women 35 years or older after only six months of trying.

[Dr. Moore] How common is infertility in the U.S.?

[Dr. Boulet] It's estimated that about 1.6 million married women of reproductive age in the United States are unable to get pregnant after at least a year of trying. Also, about four million men report that either they or their partner had seen a doctor for advice, testing, or treatment during their lifetime.

[Dr. Moore] What are some causes of infertility?

[Dr. Boulet] Infertility affects both men and women but the causes can be different. In women, age is an important cause of infertility. Aging decreases a woman's chances of having a baby and increases her chances of having a miscarriage. Another leading cause of infertility in women is polycystic ovary syndrome, or PCOS. Other causes of infertility in women can include smoking, excessive alcohol use, extreme weight gain or loss, excessive physical or emotional stress, or sexually transmitted infections. In men, infertility can be caused by age, obesity, smoking, excessive alcohol use, the use of certain medications, including those with testosterone, and exposure to radiation or toxins in the environment.

[Dr. Moore] At what point should a couple seek medical help for infertility?

[Dr. Boulet] Couples should see a doctor after at least one year of trying to get pregnant. Women 35 or older should consider seeing their doctors after six months of trying.

[Dr. Moore] What are some options available for couples who have struggled to get pregnant?

[Dr. Boulet] Infertility can be treated in a number of different ways, including medications, surgery, intrauterine insemination (also called IUI or artificial insemination), or in vitro fertilization (also called IVF). For intrauterine insemination, specially prepared sperm are placed in a woman's uterus to help her get pregnant. For in vitro fertilization, eggs are removed from a woman's ovaries, they're combined with sperm in the laboratory, and then the resulting embryo is placed back in the woman's body.

[Dr. Moore] Sheree, where can listeners get more information about infertility?

[Dr. Boulet] Listeners can go to [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov) and select "Infertility" from the A to Z list.

[Dr. Moore] Thanks, Sheree. I've been talking today with Dr. Sheree Boulet about the problem of infertility. Medical advances provide hope for couples struggling to have a baby. If you've tried and not conceived in over a year, talk with your health care provider about possible options.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Latetia Moore for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.