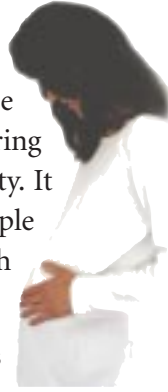


What about infertile couples who desperately want a child?

In Vitro Fertilization can be a tempting consideration for the couple who has spent years suffering with the emotional pain of infertility. It is only natural that a loving couple would want to share their love with children of their own.



But after many years of IVF, perhaps we have learned something. The process of IVF requires the creation of “extra” embryos. Several of these embryos are discarded during a screening process or eventually killed simply because they are considered “excess”.

We now know there are many serious health risks for babies conceived through IVF.

Perhaps IVF has led to the idea of “designer babies” whereby parents are now selecting the gender and other characteristics of their “preferred” child.

At some point, we have to ask ourselves, “Just because we can do it, should we?”

Isn't adoption the same thing as demanding a child?

Adopting a child is accepting someone who, because of some unfortunate circumstance, needs a loving home. Adoption is a generous act focused on a child who already exists.

Using In Vitro Fertilization is not necessarily acceptance of a child, but rather manipulation of a child into existence.

Are there any options for infertile couples?

A moral and natural technique that is becoming more commonly known among Fertility Care practitioners is Natural Procreative Technology or NaPro Technology (NPT). Research indicates that this technique has as many or more live births than IVF clinics, without putting couples through the various humiliating treatments and without creating “extra” embryos that would ultimately die or be killed.

For more information on NPT or natural techniques which can help couples better understand their cycle of fertility and the optimum time for conception, contact the Margeurite Bourgeois Family Centre at 416-465-2868.

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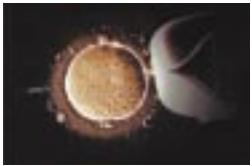
In Vitro FERTILIZATION



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY HAVE MADE ENORMOUS CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR LIVES AND SOCIETY. HOW WE RESPOND TO THESE TECHNOLOGIES TELLS US A LOT ABOUT OURSELVES. THE OVERWHELMING QUESTION REMAINS; IS IT ETHICAL SIMPLY BECAUSE IT'S POSSIBLE?

Infertility has reached epidemic proportions in the Western world. One out of six couples is seeking some sort of medical intervention to help them conceive. A variety of factors are responsible for infertility. Some couples experience physical problems which prevent conception. A growing number of couples face infertility caused by environment, birth control use, abortion or STD's. As couples consider their options, a number of ethical questions arise. In order to understand "the ethics", we must first understand how it works.

What is In Vitro Fertilization?



One form of artificial insemination involves injecting a single sperm directly into the oocyte. Photo courtesy of Alexander Tsitaras, *From Conception to Birth: A Life Unfolds*

"In vitro" literally means "in glass." In Vitro Fertilization is a process which generates the creation of a human life in a glass petri dish within a laboratory environment.

How is In Vitro Fertilization carried out?

The typical procedure involves the extraction of a number of eggs, (usually around 15 or more) from the mother, which are then fertilized by sperm from the father (or donated by a third partner) in a petri dish or test-tube. The living human embryos are then examined and three or four of them are implanted into the mother's body with the hope that one embryo will successfully implant in the lining of the womb and grow.

What happens to the rest of the embryos?

- Many embryos die in the transfer process since they are fragile.
- Some embryos are unwanted and eliminated because they are considered genetically inadequate.
- Some embryos are stored alive in freezers.
- Some embryos will die during the thawing process.

How many human embryos are lost in IVF?

The Jones Institute, one of the pioneers of In Vitro Fertilization, reports that only 10 to 20% of the human embryos produced by In Vitro Fertilization ever result in a normal pregnancy. The Centers for Disease Control estimated that in 1998, 28,000 babies were born through In Vitro Fertilization in the United States. This means that 140,000 - 280,000 human embryos remained "unused" for that year alone. Recent regulations have been introduced in Canada regarding In Vitro Fertilization; however, these are not protective or respectful of the life of children manufactured by this process.

Why is this wrong?

It is a scientific fact that human life begins at conception/fertilization. From the moment of fertilization, a human embryo has a complete genetic code and his or her growth and development is totally coordinated from within.

Human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of his existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person. When this fundamental moral line is violated or obscured, categories of people become devalued and they become easily used for utilitarian purposes.



Is it true that IVF children have a greater risk of birth defects?

In recent years, studies show a greater likelihood of complications such as rare urological defects, including bladder development outside the body, heart or central nervous system abnormalities, rare forms of cancer, increased risk of severe brain disorder and dangerously low birth weight. In addition, women face an increased risk of ectopic pregnancies and ovarian cancer following IVF treatments.

The Lancet (vol.25,p. 273), New Scientist and the new U.S. BWSresults:www.newscientist.com/news/news.jsp?id=ns99993305, www.newscientist.com/news/news.jsp?id=ns99991678, www.sciencedaily.com/release/2003/03030319082147, Lowry S, Russell H, Hickey I, Atkinson R. Incessant ovulation and ovarian cancer. Lancet 1991;337:p. 1544.

