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To nest an egg, lay off the 'golden moment'

Lynette Leong

The solution to conceiving is regular sexual intercourse

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IF YOU think there is a right time and place to make babies, think again.

Dr Wee Horng Yen, associate consultant with the department of general obstetrics and gynaecology at KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH), told TODAY: "It is common for couples who seek help to conceive to want to know when the 'golden moment' is. But there is no evidence that saving the sperm for a scheduled time is effective.

"On the contrary, the danger in doing so is that it adds to the stress of wanting to conceive and removes the spontaneity of intimacy."

The solution to conceiving is not far-fetched. "Having sexual intercourse about two or three times a week is the key to conception. Having sex on a regular basis reduces the stress and anxiety of 'saving for the moment'," Dr Wee added.

Not surprisingly, many couples who sought help confessed to having sexual intercourse about three to four times a month. Their reasons included stress and a busy work schedule. In such cases, Dr Wee advises the couples to keep a diary in which they commit time for each other.

For those who have been unsuccessful in conceiving, Dr Wee advises early treatment. "If a healthy couple has regular sexual intercourse for 12 months without conceiving, it is sensible to initiate a medical investigation. If there is a physical cause such as a problem with ovulation or a poor sperm count, it is important to start treatment early. This is because, in general, the chances of conceiving are closely related to age," he said.

According to Dr Wee, women aged 20 to 24 are most fertile. In this age group, only about 15 per cent remain infertile after one year of unprotected intercourse. In contrast, this rate increases to 37 per cent for those aged 30 to 35 and to 48 per cent for those aged 35 to 39.

In Singapore, about one in seven couples experiences difficulty in conceiving. But more people are seeking help.

Dr Wee said: "Couples, particularly the educated ones, have been seeking pre-conception advice."

"Some want reassurance and seek general advice on conception and pregnancy, while others have specific health concerns to address."

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