

Babies are fertile

WITH one in six couples having difficulties falling pregnant and IVF costs skyrocketing under the Federal Government's January 1 caps on the Medicare Safety Net, natural fertility care has never been more in demand. *City News* meets two local experts behind the natural baby making business and the women they have helped achieve the dream of falling pregnant.

EGG TIMER

WORDS: NICOLE CARRINGTON

IF YOU'RE yet to propagate the species, it can be a shock to discover how much money is being made out of baby-making in this town.

While five out of six couples will conceive problem-free, for the remainder, having a baby can seem an impossible dream and one which will cost you and your partner dearly – emotionally, physically and financially.

It's been said that infertility can be as stressful as experiencing the death of a loved one.

Talk to any of the one in five women who have experienced a miscarriage and you'll hear heartbreaking stories of emotional and physical pain and loss endured by women in their quest to conceive.

Things just got a whole lot tougher for couples experiencing difficulty conceiving following the Federal Government's January 1 changes to the Medicare Safety Net.

Under the new regime, couples using in vitro fertilisation (IVF) treatments face an additional \$1500-\$2000 cost per IVF cycle as the Medicare rebate is cut back from \$5500 to about \$4100. The price of a typical IVF cycle is about \$7000.

For women who use a private obstetrician to deliver their baby, they'll be about \$850 worse off after the changes.

The legislation has been labelled cruel and heartless by couples desperate to conceive who may no longer be able to afford fertility treatments.

And with many women delaying marriage and motherhood until their 30s and 40s, countless local businesses have now cropped up to help women's conception.

Cue the natural fertility care boom – a method used to improve fertility outcomes using naturopathic care – which is cheaper than IVF but will still set you back up to \$200 per consultation.

City News interviewed two well-respected leaders in the local natural fertility management field and two affiliated successful case studies – women who have fallen pregnant following their preconception care. These are their stories.

THE EXPERT

Katherine Maslen, 26, naturopath and herbalist, Wellness One, 1 Park Rd, Milton

"I specialise in natural fertility care because it is very rewarding to be able to help couples overcome their fertility problems and to go on to watch their pregnancy

progress and them give birth to beautiful, healthy babies. I also got into the field because of my own health problems that I was experiencing at the time. I then studied for five years.

"Women's difficulties conceiving are often easily helped through natural fertility management. Often these women feel like the conditions they have are untreatable and they can't have children, when often this is not actually the case. Nine times out of 10, these women come to me as a last option.

"Every time they get a period, they go through a loss.

"I see women from all ages, usually aged from 25 to late 40s. I treat women with unexplained infertility and also women with medical conditions such as polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) and endometriosis and pathological health conditions which can affect fertility.

"Irregular periods, hormonal imbalances and even stress each have a huge impact on fertility. The stress of infertility, on busy working women, is the worst stress of all.

"About 40 per cent of the infertility equation is due to men's infertility problems. You can have the healthiest egg, but poor sperm. I recommend that both women and their partners come in to see me.

"Natural fertility care also results in a reduced risk of miscarriage, stillbirth or malformations, easier birth and better bonding between parents and baby. Patients often report improved energy and improved resilience to stress.

"I have found a success rate of 77 per cent of patients becoming pregnant. There have been no miscarriages, birth defects or pregnancy complications, and all babies have been free of disease.

"Preconception care is crucial for both mothers and fathers to be, as it ensures that a good supply of the nutrients and co-factors required to support conception and foetal health are present. It involves using herbal medicines and nutritional supplements to improve the health of the reproductive system and give the building blocks required for healthy sperm and egg production. A good diet is also very important.

"My high success rates are due to the individualistic natural fertility programs. I recently helped a couple to fall pregnant



who'd been trying for more than 10 years!

"I often work alongside GPs and gynaecologists to help patients resolve their fertility issues. Naturopathy can also help those undergoing IVF to improve the chances of a successful cycle and reduce the associated side effects.

"Natural fertility management is a lot less expensive than an IVF cycle but I recommend that women with pre-existing medical conditions come and see me to start pre-natal care about six months out from trying for a baby."

To find out more, visit www.naturalfertilitybrisbane.com.au or www.naturopathbrisbane.com.

Katherine runs regular natural fertility management seminars in Milton. Phone 3368 3369.

SUCCESS STORY No. 1

Justine Grindrod, 38, accountant

"I wanted to see a local naturopath with a good reputation and I'd heard of Katherine. My husband and I got married last year and started trying for a baby too.

"I'd been diagnosed with polycystic ovarian syndrome and had been on the Pill and knew that I might have a hard time

conceiving. After five months of treatment with Katherine, involving a preconception care program and herbal medicines to address the PCOS, I fell pregnant.

"I'm now in my 13th week of pregnancy.

"Katherine helped regulate my cycle. I had actually booked myself in to see an IVF doctor before I realised I was pregnant. I couldn't believe I fell pregnant so soon. It's amazing.

"I really attribute my pregnancy to Katherine. She was one of the first people I called with the good news. I am still seeing her to ensure the health of myself and my baby. I've spent about \$2000 on Katherine and it's been worth every cent."

THE EXPERT

Mary Melling, founder and naturopath/acupuncturist, Paddington Clinic, 12/261 Given Tce

"Here at the clinic, we do a lot of specialised work in fertility because there is such a great need for it. My husband Peter Delaney and I opened the clinic 29 years ago and I've been in the industry a little

