

TAKING A PAUSE TO EXAMINE THE
MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES FELT BY
WOMEN TRYING TO CONCEIVE

Pregnant Pause



May 2023

Hoopsy

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INTRODUCTION

By Lara Solomon, founder of eco pregnancy test company Hoopsy

Trying to conceive is hard, especially when it doesn't happen straight away. It can be isolating and take a huge toll on our mental health and wellbeing.

When I went through my own trying to conceive (TTC) journey, I gravitated towards friends who I knew had done or were doing IVF to talk to about it because I didn't need to explain things as I did with everyone else - they just got it. I was lucky enough to have a few friends who understood, but I also wished there was a bigger support network available for people struggling with infertility that I could turn to.

The experience made me realise that many people don't have a support network to lean on when going through a difficult fertility journey.



I set up our free Hoopsy fertility community as a place for people to go to for support, to interact with others who are on or have been through the journey, to get help, expert advice and support at a time that can be exceptionally hard - both physically and emotionally. I also felt there wasn't enough education out there on fertility for women - many women (myself included) got told not to get

pregnant their entire lives, as if it happened really easily or quickly. In fact, for the majority of women, it isn't like that.

Having IVF doesn't guarantee a baby, and there are so many myths in the fertility space that I felt a real desire to set up a community where people could get advice from real experts - all completely for free.

In January 2023, we surveyed 522 women who have been TTC for at least a year to better understand their mental health struggles and loneliness while trying for a baby. The survey revealed many eye-opening facts about how hard TTC can be. For example:

- 35% of those surveyed said they worry they will never become a mum
- 30% said they feel lonely and isolated on their fertility journey
- 28% of participants admitted to feeling upset when they saw pregnant women with bumps

We want to highlight that these feelings are perfectly natural when struggling to conceive.

We know that talking about infertility is hard for anyone going through it, which can make it feel all the more lonely. One in six couples struggle to conceive, so if that's you, please know you are certainly not alone.

That's why Hoopsy has launched a campaign called Pregnant Pause to try and get more people to take a moment to really think about the thousands of women who are fighting their infertility battle every single day.

This report has been created as a guide for women who are trying to conceive - we've packed it full of helpful insights & tips for your TTC journey, covering everything from taking control of your physical & mental health throughout your fertility journey to improving your wellbeing & where to seek support if you need it.

Infertility isn't something we talk about enough, so let's take a moment to pause and support those on this difficult journey.

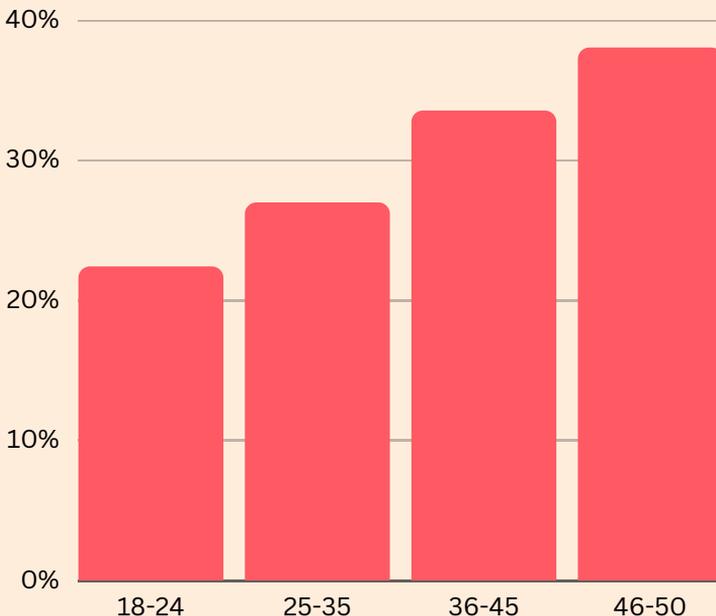
Lara

2. LET'S TAKE A PREGNANT PAUSE

Hoopsy's independent survey of 522 women who've been trying for a baby for at least a year found that one in three are worried they will never become a parent (35%). A similar number, 30% of those surveyed, said they feel isolated in their fertility journey. One in 4 believe that TTC is much harder on a woman's health than a man's; additionally, 23% of participants said they don't feel their partner understands how difficult it is on them.

Interestingly the older the women surveyed, the more likely they were to say they felt isolated.

Women by Age who said they felt isolated when TTC



Struggling to conceive affects many women as they go about in their day-to-day lives as well. Around 28% of women surveyed admitted they feel upset when they see a pregnant woman sporting a bump.

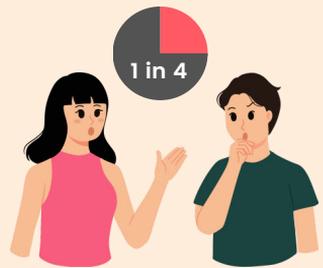
Just over one in 10 said they now avoid friends with kids because they find their own fertility journey difficult, and just under one in five participants also stated that they actively avoid places where babies will be or mums with prams, such as coffee shops or particular shops.



Are worried they will never become a parent



Feel isolated in their fertility journey



Believe that TTC is much harder on a woman's health than a man's



They don't feel their partner understands how difficult it is on them



Avoid friends with kids because they find their own fertility journey difficult



Actively avoid places where babies will be or mums with prams

If you find yourself sending gifts to friends instead of attending their baby shower or saying no to a coffee and catch-up with your postpartum friend, know you are not alone, and it's totally ok to protect your mental health and care from a distance. Especially on the hardest days.

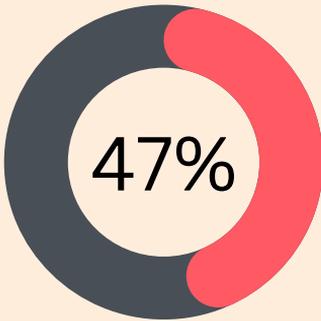
Those living with infertility are no strangers to feelings of sadness, depression and anxiety. Many suffer quietly without letting on to friends and family. These feelings can become amplified when a couple or individual has been trying to conceive for a long time and start to feel like they may never be able to have children.

How Women Feel when TTC

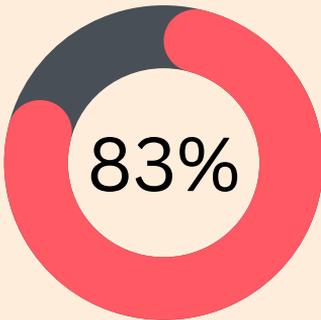


A survey by the Fertility Network in 2022 found that 47% of women surveyed experienced feelings of depression “often” or “all the time” and a huge 83% felt sad, frustrated, or worried “all the time”.

These figures really highlight that something needs to change, and women who are struggling to get pregnant need support and understanding - not be left to deal with these enormous feelings alone. Unfortunately, suffering in silence has sadly become the norm because infertility is still very much considered a taboo subject that most people don't know how to react to.



Experienced feelings of depression “often” or “all the time”

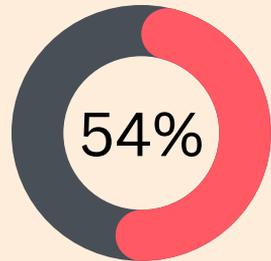


Felt sad, frustrated, or worried “all the time”

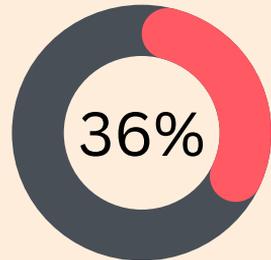
Hoopsy's founder Lara knows first-hand how isolating and hard infertility and TTC can be. After going through a difficult and emotional fertility journey, Lara decided to set up Hoopsy, which makes pregnancy tests made from 99% paper - that are 99% plastic free.

She came up with the idea after becoming a member of several IVF and TTC Facebook groups and was taken aback by the sheer number of pregnancy tests that women trying to get pregnant use and dispose of every cycle. Hoopsy's research shows that over half of women who've been TTC over a long period of time (54%) are addicted to "peeing on a stick" to test for pregnancy. Plus, over a third of these women (36%) have felt worried about the plastic from all the pregnancy tests they've used.

Women who've been TTC over a long period of time who are addicted to "peeing on a stick" to test for pregnancy



Women who felt worried about the plastic from all the pregnancy tests they've used



Realising the amount of plastic waste traditional midstream pregnancy tests create, Lara decided there had to be a better way.

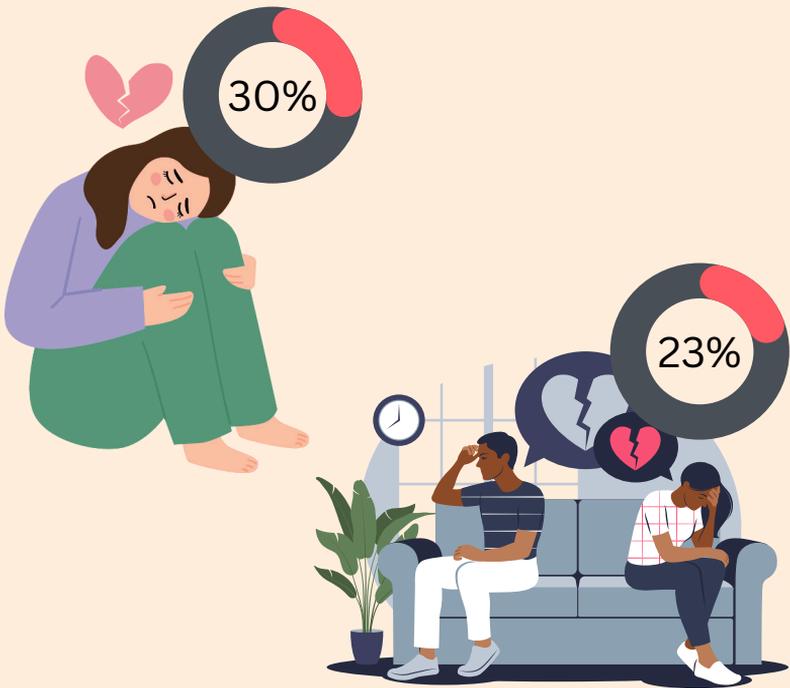
After a lot of research, she found that no one had yet managed to create a truly eco-friendly midstream pregnancy test, and most of the market was still dominated by plastic pregnancy tests, which take up to 30 years to break down in landfill. After much testing and hard work, the Hoopsy Eco Pregnancy Test was born.



THE HOOPSY FERTILITY COMMUNITY

Lara's journey with Hoopsy wasn't just about creating a sustainable pregnancy test. She wanted to take a positive step towards helping women going on their own fertility journey, knowing first-hand how hard it was to find people who understood her own journey.

This was also highlighted in the Hoopsy survey, with just under a quarter of women surveyed saying they have no one to talk to about how hard it is. Almost 30% stated they feel lonely and isolated on their journey. Additionally, 23% of respondents feel their partner doesn't understand how difficult it is.



So, Lara launched the [Hoopsy Fertility Community](#) - a free online community with the aim of bringing like-minded women together to support each other so no one feels alone. The community is a space where all women are welcome regardless of what their journey looks like, whether they have recently started trying to conceive, or if their journey has been longer and more difficult than expected. The Hoopsy Community is a space to share experiences, make friends and seek expert advice.

Lara also found a lot of conflicting information online on her fertility journey. The community aims to be a knowledge base of expert-backed information that can actually help people rather than confuse them while trying to conceive. Members are free to engage with the community experts to find the answers to anything that's on their minds and is important to them, as well as chatting to other women in similar situations.

Joining an online community also has some science-backed benefits for our mental health and wellbeing. According to a study conducted by the [Pew Research Center](#), 81% of individuals who join online communities state they feel more connected, and the support they receive helps relieve stress and anxiety.



Social isolation as a result of infertility can be a real trigger for mental illness. It's not always easy to open up to our friends and family about our struggles, as our survey results supported. Perhaps because we don't feel comfortable doing so or because they don't have the knowledge or expertise to help you, so it feels pointless.

The Hoopsy Fertility Community offers an alternative support network. It's a place to connect with others on the same journey as you, that answers questions that you want to know the answers to and is full of advice and support that might not be available elsewhere. We strongly believe that no one going through a difficult fertility journey should suffer in silence.



**REBECCA CLAYTON,
BLOGGER & INSTAGRAMMER
@QUEENBEADY**



33-year-old blogger and Instagrammer Rebecca Clayton who writes as @queenbeady, now has an eight month old girl - but a year into her TTC journey and after years of painful periods, it was found she had a dermoid cyst and endometriosis.

“What you learn at school is vastly different to what you come to expect when trying to conceive. Everyone will have you believe that after one fateful night or even so much as a glance at the opposite sex that, boom, you would fall pregnant.

It seemed so easy.

But that was far from our truth. Whilst I don't find myself within the infertility community, for a long while during our TTC journey I believed I would be.

I'd always had problems with my period. I remember on my first week at secondary school, at 11 years old I found myself bleeding and thinking "what on earth?" - it was quite the experience for a young, not even teenage, girl.

Days and weeks were lost at school because I was in so much pain, throwing up hurt so badly. By the time I was just turning 14 I was already prescribed Microgynon which I was on, or the equivalent of, until I turned 30. It was just masking the pain (somewhat) and for some reason I (very stupidly) didn't get anything looked into until it was nearly, very too late.

It was only until after a year or so into our TTC journey, that we decided to go to the doctors. I know I can't speak for everyone, but I was so very lucky with my referral to the gynaecologist and my scan dates came pretty quickly. That was when we finally started to get the root of an array of issues.

The scans showed that I have dermoid cysts and what was likely to be stage two endometriosis - both of which were on my left ovary. (I haven't had any surgery yet to determine my endometriosis as this is the main way to diagnose it but it's highly likely that that has been the root of my extremely painful periods every month.)

During our journey to having a baby, for a long time, I would go as far as saying that I went to a very sad and lonely place. I comfort ate and put on a lot of weight, I shied away from social events. I was angry and bitter at the world. I became essentially a shell of myself whilst pouring my heart and soul into my side hustle, The Quietly Wild, to take my mind off what was happening.

Covid didn't help with the loneliness as we had started trying before the lockdowns began.

Seeing young families brought me to tears frequently, especially at Christmas times. Endless pregnancy

announcements broke my heart every time I saw one. It hit a lot harder when it was close friends sharing their news.

You wanted to be so happy for them, and you were, but once again you felt as though you were grieving for what you thought you couldn't have.

When we started our process with the hospital that was when I felt I could finally talk about it a bit more. It's silly really, but it felt like I could finally validate what I was saying or feeling now that we were going through the whole process of working out why it wasn't happening for us.

Nearly 3 years down the line we found ourselves pregnant, funnily enough my BFP came just days before my husband was due to start his tests to make sure he also didn't have any issues with conceiving as well.

We now have a beautiful baby girl, who is now nearly eight months old. Time has flown by and it's been the most amazing experience becoming a mum and a family.

I wish I could go back and tell the past version of me everything will be okay and it will work out. You'll find a village that are going through a similar experience and also, to look after myself a bit better to help with my mental health.

I think the Hoopsy community is just brilliant - such a wonderful resource for women who're TTC. I wish something like this had existed when I was trying to conceive as I think it would have made a world of difference to how lonely I felt."



3. BUILDING RESILIENCE

There's no doubt trying to conceive can be a tough and emotionally draining journey. The stress and disappointment that often comes with unsuccessful attempts can take a toll on our mental health and wellbeing over time. Seeking external help through counselling, fertility coaching or through connecting with a supportive community can be immensely beneficial in navigating this journey and building resilience.

Fertility and mental health professionals can provide emotional support, guidance, and practical tools to help individuals and couples cope with the ups and downs of TTC. In this section, we will explore some expert insights on how counselling and fertility coaching can help individuals and couples on their TTC journey and the benefits that can be gained from seeking external support.

It's important for anyone struggling to understand that there is no right or wrong way to deal with the emotions you are feeling. It's completely OK to do what you need to do to protect your mental health and wellbeing.

**GEMMA MARGERISON,
CONFIDENCE AND RESILIENCE
COACH**



Trying to conceive can be incredibly difficult and lonely for women, and I think this is reflected in Hoopsy's survey results. The cycle of hope, disappointment, and grief on a monthly basis, alongside having to check dates, keep yourself healthy, and go about day-to-day life, is a lot to deal with, and I don't think we talk enough about that. The beginning of every period is a loss, and that has an impact on your mental health.

I think it's important for anyone who is going through a fertility journey to remember that there is no right or wrong way to deal

with the feelings that arise from this cycle, and the kindest thing you can do for yourself is to listen to your body and respond accordingly. If you need to take time away from certain situations, that's ok. If you want to be around families and children, that's ok too. Just remember, you are not alone, so please do not struggle in silence; reach out to someone and get support.

Groups like the Hoopsy community are great for connecting with other women who are going through a similar experience. This, alongside things like coaching, counselling, or training, can help to build personal resilience.

The results of the Hoopsy survey further revealed that just under a quarter of women felt they had no one to talk to about how hard their journey has been.

SARAH BANKS, PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT COACH AND AUTHOR OF THE IVF POSITIVITY PLANNER



The findings of Hoopsy's survey really highlight how lonely it can feel when everyone around you seems to fall pregnant easily, and they don't understand the depth of emotions that infertility causes (or how triggering it can be to be around pregnant friends or friends with children). There needs to be more support and understanding for those struggling to get pregnant and going through treatment.

Sarah Banks has the following advice for TTC women struggling with their mental health:

1. Find peer support: This can be helpful because it validates your feelings – it's important to know that it's completely normal to feel that way and you're not alone. Finding a community of people who understand will give you a support network and people to chat too when you're feeling lonely. This could be an online support group such as my closed Facebook group TTC Support UK, the Hoopsy community or Instagram accounts and podcasts that offer support.

2. Get professional support: If you are struggling emotionally, you may benefit from the support of a fertility counsellor – there should be one linked to your fertility clinic, or you can find a counsellor local to you on the BICA website.

3. Holistic therapists: Holistic therapy includes acupuncture and reflexology – aside from the benefits these treatments offer, during the sessions, the practitioners also talk through how you're feeling and give you an outlet to talk through some

of your worries. These can be great as a midpoint if you don't feel that counselling is right for you.

4. Find like-minded women to socialise with: Try to develop a wider circle of friends, colleagues, people you know from the gym and people you meet at a support group who don't have children. Think about the other social circles you have - who could you do more with, who have similar interests to you that you can organise more activities with?

5. Take back control: Taking steps towards doing things that you can control in life will make you feel empowered and happier. For example, eating healthily, getting plenty of rest and exercise - then also researching and booking treatments, organising time off work and practicing activities such as yoga and mindfulness to help you recentre.

Struggling to conceive doesn't have to be a lonely experience for you. Unfortunately, 1 in 6 couples struggle to conceive, so there are lots of people who

completely understand how you are feeling and can support you through it.

As our experts have echoed, finding the right support during your fertility journey is so important we cannot stress it enough.

So many couples have trouble trying to conceive, yet there is so little support advertised as publicly available to those who are affected.

No one ever enters their first fertility appointment prepared for what comes next. It's an experience few people talk about, and very little can prepare you for the journey. There's no prior warning of the emotional ups and downs that come with infertility and TTC of the countless appointments, blood tests, injections and the sheer commitment, blood, sweat and tears that going through fertility treatment takes. Just being able to chat online with someone who can say 'I get it, it sucks' can make all the difference.

When trying for a baby doesn't go as planned, it's natural to worry, have questions and want to talk. This is why peer and professional support can make such a big difference to how we feel on our fertility journey. We would encourage anyone to build a network of like-minded individuals around them.



4. HOLISTIC THERAPIES

When you are TTC but not getting that big fat positive, you might, aside from talking to your doctors, consider trying some alternative therapies to help you along your journey and perhaps increase your chances of conception. Holistic therapies are sometimes recommended to patients trying to conceive or undergoing fertility treatments to help their general relaxation and improve their wellbeing.

Holistic therapies are defined as those that fall outside the mainstream healthcare provisions and can include the following:



Meditation



Acupuncture



Mindfulness



Yoga



Reflexology



Talking therapy

There's a lot of evidence to support the benefits of holistic therapies when trying for a baby. Techniques such as meditation, mindfulness and yoga can help to reduce stress levels. Elevated stress levels can interfere with ovulation and conception and make it harder to get pregnant.

Other techniques, such as acupuncture, reflexology and massage, are known for improving physical health as they promote relaxation, reduce inflammation and increase blood flow to the reproductive organs. In this section, we will explore some of the benefits of incorporating alternative therapies in your life, along with some expert insights.

MEDITATION AND YOGA

Increased stress can raise the amount of cortisol (the stress hormone) in our bodies. When these levels get too high, it can negatively affect our delicate hormone balance and our ability to conceive.

It's recommended that women trying to conceive minimise the amount of stress in their lives. However, we all know this is much easier said than done! Any difficult fertility journey can cause us a lot of unwelcome stress, whether we like it or not.

Many women trying to conceive get stuck in a vicious cycle of getting more and more stressed as the months pass, and with each negative pregnancy test or failed cycle comes a whole new wave of stress, further decreasing our chances of becoming pregnant the following month.

Yoga and meditation can act as an excellent relaxation and stress management tool. Especially when you choose the right kind of fertility-focused yoga.

**MONJA WENAAS MYRANN,
FERTILITY YOGA INSTRUCTOR**



It is important, in my opinion, to recognise and acknowledge the feelings of loneliness and fear that many women on their TTC journey experience. As opposed to a group yoga class, yoga therapy is a good option to consider.

A yoga therapist will look to understand you as a whole person and involve you in the process of improving your well-being by designing an individualised yoga programme.

The program draws from yoga philosophy and creates a brief

practice (e.g. 5-20 minutes) that can be practically incorporated into your day.

Restorative yoga or a slower-paced style are my preferences. I find they provide the opportunity to slow down, connect with your breath and have the feeling of taking care of yourself.

As the Hoopsy survey points out, feelings and emotions can arise for various reasons and situations. Breathing can be a great way to empower you, give you a sense of being in control, activate the parasympathetic nervous system and reduce feelings of overwhelm.

The beautiful thing about the breath is that you can connect with it anywhere and anytime without anyone noticing. Take a few slow, deep breaths and feel your belly expand and contract. Placing one hand on your belly and one hand on your chest is a nice way to connect to this practice.

REFLEXOLOGY

Reflexology is an ancient alternative therapy that involves the application of pressure to specific points on the feet, hands, or ears, which reflect the different organs and systems of the body.

The theory behind reflexology is that these points, known as reflex points, are connected to other parts of the body through a system of energy pathways. By stimulating them, it is possible to promote healing and balance within the body.

Reflexology is often used as a complementary therapy to help support conventional fertility treatments, such as IVF. Reflexology has many benefits, including: Improved circulation, reduced stress and anxiety, hormonal balance, and improved immune functions.

A study completed by the Association of Reproductive Reflexologists revealed that in a sample of 180 patient cases of women between 24-46, 68%

CARLY GARRETT, FERTILITY REFLEXOLOGIST AND COACH



went on to have a successful pregnancy. 100 conceived naturally, and 22 through assisted conception (IVF, IUI etc).

From the clients I have worked with over the last 18 years, TTC is a lonely place that hugely affects mental health. All of the external pressures of doing everything 'perfectly' and having sex as a means to an end instead of because you want to - it all takes its toll.

Trying for a baby can be stressful and emotional for many couples. Reflexology as a natural therapy which can help relax your body, balance

hormones and prepare your body for pregnancy.

The benefits of a reflexology session with a trained Reflexologist start from your very first consultation. You are fully heard; we take time to listen to and understand your story and all you have been through.

We can analyse any results you may have had or point you in the right direction if not, as well as guide you on understanding your fertile signs - we really are a wealth of knowledge.

I also give my clients access to different mind/body connection recordings to help aid their mental health. The reflexology session itself is pure bliss - an hour of you concentrating on you.

Relaxing into a deep meditative state enables your body to heal and make changes that cannot happen when you are constantly in a fight or flight mode. By using specific Reflexology protocols and techniques, we can help

change and support a cycle. Prompt ovulation eases period pain and elongates the luteal phase.

Each treatment is different as it is tailored especially to you, any 'conditions' you may have (PCOS/endo/pain/long cycles) and where you are in your cycle (for both natural or supported cycles). We will give hand reflexology as 'homework' to help support your cycle outside of treatments.

Reflexology is also a wonderful way to support yourself during an IVF cycle.

Treatments will work alongside the protocol from your clinic and will support you at every stage. I also support many ladies who come to me after a miscarriage. Treatments are a great way of rebalancing and reconnecting with your body.

Find connection. Groups like Hoopsy and Hannah Pearn's, Don't tell me to relax Facebook groups are wonderful ways of feeling connected and supported by others going through similar fertility difficulties.

Know that there are no good or bad emotions. Each one is trying to guide you. If you are feeling sadness, sit with it and ask what it needs. Is it signalling that you need comfort? Try to have a toolbox of techniques to help you on those tough days. Seek external help if you need to.

ACUPUNCTURE

Acupuncture, like reflexology, is an ancient Chinese therapy that involves the insertion of fine needles into specific points of the body. It is often used to alleviate pain, reduce stress and anxiety, and promote overall well-being. In recent years, acupuncture has gained popularity as a complementary therapy for infertility, with many couples turning to acupuncture as a way to improve their chances of conceiving.

Evidence suggests that acupuncture may help improve the success rates of fertility treatments such as in vitro fertilisation (IVF). One study published in the journal *Fertility and Sterility* found that women



**CAITLIN ALLEN, AN
ACUPUNCTURIST FROM
WWW.CAITLINALLEN.CO.UK**

who received acupuncture before and after embryo transfer during IVF had significantly higher pregnancy rates than those who did not receive acupuncture. Another study published in the same

Many of the women who are trying to conceive experience similar feelings to those identified by the Hoopsy statistics - fear and worry that they will never become a mother, a feeling of failure and that their body has let them down, feeling lonely and isolated with a sense of loss of self.

From a biomedical perspective and following scientific principles, acupuncture can help support women trying to conceive in several ways. It's been found that acupuncture triggers key physiological responses, such as releasing endorphins and activating neurotransmitters.

My sense from many women that I see is that their fertile years coincide with their busiest years. These women often build their careers, deal with aging parents, and lead busy social lives. There is very little chance to rest, to pause and to reflect.

These women are used to working hard, setting

themselves goals and achieving them. Yet, not getting pregnant as easily or quickly as we expect or hope calls everything we believe about ourselves and the world in which we are part into question.

Acupuncture is a holistic treatment that supports our emotional and physical health. It brings us back into our bodies and settles our over-active brains, allowing for rest and rejuvenation.

THE BENEFITS OF HOLISTIC THERAPIES

TTC is a challenging and emotional journey, and holistic therapies can provide much-needed support and guidance at a difficult time. In the Hoopsy community, we aim to provide a form of talk therapy where members can receive advice from experts and ask them anything that's on their minds. It's also a form of group therapy where women can turn to each other for support.

5. EAT WELL TO THINK WELL

Do you ever feel sluggish, unfocused, or just not quite on top of your game? One way to boost your mental and physical wellbeing is by eating a balanced diet. What we eat directly impacts our mood. We've all heard that eating a healthy diet when pregnant is important for both mum and baby, but what about when we are trying to conceive?

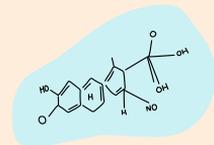
Whilst there's no fixed, one size fits all diet to follow when TTC, research has suggested that a healthy diet rich in unsaturated fats, whole grains, fish, and veggies can positively impact female fertility.

Taking care of your body by following a healthy diet and lifestyle has been linked to improved chances of getting pregnant, especially if you're undergoing fertility treatment. Here's a quick summary of some of the ways following a healthy diet can help boost your chances of getting pregnant:



Improving reproductive health: A healthy diet can provide the nutrients that are essential for reproductive health, such as zinc, folate, and vitamin B12. These nutrients help in the production of healthy eggs and sperm and also support a healthy reproductive system.

Regulating hormones: A healthy diet can help regulate hormones that are important when TTC, such as estrogen and progesterone. Hormonal imbalances can interfere with ovulation and reduce fertility.





Reducing inflammation: A diet rich in anti-inflammatory foods, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and healthy fats, can help reduce inflammation in the body which can be linked to fertility problems.

Maintaining a healthy weight: Obesity can reduce fertility in both men and women. Being conscious of what you put into your body can help you maintain or reach a healthy weight and boost fertility.



If making changes to your diet sounds daunting, don't worry. You don't have to make any drastic changes; small changes and healthy swaps can make a significant difference.

EATING WELL FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Adopting a healthy diet doesn't only benefit your physical and reproductive health. It can also help boost your mental health, which, let's face it, can be critical when dealing with the ups and downs of a fertility journey. We get that when you are feeling low, eating a healthy diet might not be top of your priority list.

Studies have also shown that consuming a diet high in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins can reduce the risk of depression and anxiety. Here's a quick guide on how to eat well to think well during your fertility journey.



Eat a balanced diet: Make sure your meals include a variety of foods from all food groups – fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats. This will give your body and brain the essential nutrients they need to function at their best.

Include brain-boosting foods: Certain foods have been linked to improved cognitive function and memory. These include fatty fish, nuts and seeds, berries, leafy greens, and whole grains. Try to include these foods in your diet regularly.



Stay hydrated: Dehydration can impair cognitive function and mood and make it hard to concentrate. Make sure you're drinking plenty of water throughout the day, limit your intake of sugary drinks & alcohol.

Avoid processed foods: Processed foods, such as sugary snacks and fast food, can lead to spikes and crashes in blood sugar levels, which can affect mood and energy levels.



Don't skip meals: Skipping meals can lead to dips in blood sugar levels, which can affect cognitive function and mood. Ensure you eat regular meals & snacks throughout the day to maintain stable blood sugar levels.

Mindful eating: Take time to enjoy your meals and eat mindfully. This means paying attention to the flavours and textures of your food and eating without distractions (such as your phone or TV). Mindful eating can help reduce stress and improve overall well-being.



Healthy breakfast: When you start the day with a healthy breakfast, you are less likely to snack between meals and crave high-sugar/low-energy giving foods.

When you're trying to conceive, it can be so, so hard to eat healthy all the time. If you need a takeaway or comfort food, then of course that's totally fine, but just try not to make it what you always eat. Eating a balanced and well-rounded diet can improve your mental and physical health and potentially boost your fertility and egg quality whilst you're at it.

CONCLUSION

It's clear from the findings of our survey that women who are trying to conceive, and particularly those that have been trying for a longer period of time, need a lot more support.

It's a sad statistic that 124 women we surveyed feel they have no one to talk to on their fertility journey. Yet when you consider that 1 in 6 couples struggle with infertility, it feels like it shouldn't be that way. No one going through this journey should have to face it alone, which is why we want to highlight that there is support available for these women, both professional and free, within online communities. There is no shame in seeking help for a problem that isn't that uncommon, and we should be able to talk about it more freely.

The Pregnant Pause campaign aims to break the silence and stigma associated with infertility. We want all women struggling to know that there are places they can turn to when they feel alone and isolated. That's what the Hoopsy Fertility Community is all about, it's completely free, and all women are welcome to join, browse the content available and ask questions when they feel ready to.

If you'd like to find out more about the Hoopsy Fertility Community, head to community.hoopsy.com we can't wait to meet you!

Thank you for reading, I hope it was helpful, if you have any questions or comments please do get in touch

[Hoopsy.com/fertility-community](https://www.Hoopsy.com/fertility-community)

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