



Living Health 'n' wellbeing

When it doesn't happen

ON THE HORIZON Infertility among couples is on the rise today. But with some lifestyle changes, many worried couples can realise their parenting dreams, **Dr Hrishikesh Pai**

primarily refers to the bi-ability of a person to con-
ceptive. This happens
couple hasn't conceived af-
of contraceptive-free inter-
female is over the age of 35).
may also refer to the state of
is unable to carry a prog-
term. Generally, worldwide,
d that one in seven couples
is conceiving, with the inci-
in most countries, independ-
of the country's develop-
incidence of infertility is
In India, the incidence of in-
between 10 and 20%.
though population growth is
tern, there are a substantial
fertile couples. Thus, infer-
ferred as an important national
cerning reproductive health.
commonly due to some com-
in both the male and female
are many biological causes
some which may be bypassed
intervention. Majority of in-
are caused by genetics and
stable. However, it is possible
one potential infertility cases
about certain changes to our
lifestyle.



crease the risk of miscarriage.

■ A well-balanced diet consisting of carbohydrates, proteins and fibres should be consumed. A diet rich in proteins from vegetables rather than from animals combined with a good amount of fibre and iron, less trans fat and sugar from carbohydrates, more high-fat dairy products and less low-fat dairy products, along with taking multivitamins decreases the relative risk of infertility due to ovulatory disorders in women.

Dietary imbalances leading to deficiency of Vitamin C, folate, selenium or zinc can increase the risk of infertility. Women should increase their folic acid intake (found in green leafy vegetables, fruit, cereals, but also available as supple-

One should maintain a body weight close to the ideal number for one's height to reduce the possibility of hormone imbalances. Obesity is known to cause infertility in males by lowering sperm count through overheating, and in females through the suppression of ovulation.

■ One should get yearly check-ups for certain medical conditions affecting fertility. Early diagnosis of conditions like pelvic inflammatory disease (PID), endometriosis and cervical cancer may prevent infertility.

■ Certain medications or herbal remedies could also affect fertility. Such drugs should be discussed with one's gynaecologist. Additionally, one must give up recreational drugs such as marijuana

ment. Examples of new technologies include intracytoplasmic sperm injection, oocyte donation, and embryo cryopreservation.

So, if all efforts to conceive a child have been unsuccessful over a period of six months or longer, it is best that the couple consult a doctor. A proper diagnosis of the specific cause of infertility in one's case will enable the doctor to prescribe appropriate management.

Yes, many drugs can cause impaired fertility in both men and women, including antidepressants, tranquilisers and narcotics. Anti-cancer drugs can cause ovarian and testicular failure temporarily or permanently. Additionally, many drugs can cause miscarriage or fetal defect once