

Upcoming Events:

Embryology Lab Evening
September 9, 2003, 6pm
"Mystery Behind the Microscope"
sponsored by Ferring Pharmaceu-
ticals To RSVP call or email us.

Free Group Injection Instructions
On Monday Evenings
Call for more information and to RSVP.

Bagel Day
September 17, 2003, 7:30am-12pm
Topic: Healthbanks, the online patient education program — sponsored by Organon
Stop by in the morning to enjoy complementary Starbucks coffee and bagels.

++ Telegram ++

► SDFC's web site now has a comprehensive "Download Center" where new and existing patients can download forms, booklets and manuals used at SDFC. Go to sdfertility.com and click on "Patient Resources".

► Besides preventing birth defects when trying to conceive, folic acid is a major building block that helps protect against a range of diseases throughout your entire life. New research found that smokers and secondhand smokers have lower folate levels than nonsmokers. So make sure you take at least 400mcg of folic acid per day and avoid exposure to secondhand smoking.

Quote of the Month:

"Upbeat and positive attitude of all. The staff is very caring and committed to excellent patient care."
Patient's response when asked what she liked best at SDFC.

Newsletter Subscription:

Receive our monthly newsletter per email and stay informed about fertility issues! Subscribe by sending an email to newsletter@sdfertility.com and read missed issues in our archive at

Closer Look on Contracts for Cryopreservation

Due to the significant number of court disputes over frozen sperm and embryos, fertility specialists nationwide are reviewing their cryopreservation contracts. Most court cases are filed when a couple divorces. An article in the recent issue of *Fertility and Sterility* points out that court cases clarify two important issues. One is the definition of frozen sperm and embryos as "persons, property or unique materials that are neither persons nor property". The other issue is the disposition of the frozen gametes or embryos. Overall, the courts ruling has been to consider the intentions of the involved parties and public policy.

Drs. Kettel and Hummel make an effort to eliminate disputes by clearly wording consent forms for cryopreservation. Since SDFC is not a long-term storage facility, patients' specimens are stored for a maximum of two years. If the patient doesn't contact SDFC and the staff can't locate the owner after two years, the semen specimen will be disposed. The agreement to store frozen embryos runs three years and can be renewed for an additional two years. The consent form also requires the couple's decision about disposal of frozen embryos in case one partner should die or in case the couple divorces.



Embryo during freezing process showing ice crystals.
Source: Asymptote, Ltd.

No Discrimination Against Women in Insurance Coverage

It is lawful if an employer denies health insurance coverage for fertility treatment that can only be performed on women. This is the ruling of the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in a recent suit filed by a New York fertility patient who felt that her insurance violated her civil rights against discrimination "because of sex" to include pregnancy and "related conditions". Her health plan allowed benefits for a number of fertility procedures, but specifically excluded fertility treatments of artificial insemination and in-vitro fertilization that are performed on women. Her law suit was rejected after the judge found that the exclusions of those procedures affect males and females equally and the plan provides equal coverage for men and women equally.

"Good coverage for fertility treatment is hard to find," comments Myrna Helmi, the insurance specialist at SDFC. "Patients depend on their employer's investment and it seems that the bigger the company, the better the health coverage." Big companies such as Qualcomm and Pfizer have good insurance companies like Cigna and United Health Care that cover more than the average health insurance. Blue Shield Blue Cross of Massachusetts covers IUI, IVF and Egg Donation, thus making it one of the most desirable insurance plans for fertility patients in the U.S.

Magic Number 35

It has become common knowledge that a woman's fertility decreases with the age of 35. However, it is not just women who have decreasing fertility. If both partners are 35 years old, the couple has a 82% chance of getting pregnant in the first year of trying. If the 35 year old woman's partner is 40 or older, their chances decrease to 70%.

Drs. Hummel and Kettel remind worried couples of the positive sides of the so called "Advanced Maternal Age". Women over 35 can improve their chance to start a family by living a healthy lifestyle and taking prenatal vitamins. Women over 35 are more in sync with their bodies than in their twenties and are more emotionally and financially stable to handle the challenges of having a baby.



This newsletter is sponsored by Arizona Apothecary Shops. Visit www.fertilitymeds.us or email: info@fertilitymeds.us