

Modern lifestyle affecting maternal health

Doctors and working women don't seem to be able to see eye-to-eye on this one. While women out to make a mark in their professional life are ready to delay natural pregnancy and even opt for artificial conception to save time and effort, doctors advise that the best way to have children is to "have them the natural way and well in time".



Speaking about the declining fertility trend among young women, senior infertility specialist at Genesis IVF Dr. Priyamvada says: "Several women in their late 20s and 30s today are faced with a stressful office environment that requires them to work long hours and in shifts. Women then are often left with no choice but to plough through the day in a 'time-bomb' like pressure of a professional and personal life. This gnaws at the mental and emotional resilience of

any person, leaving them tense, irritated and edgy."

Doctors claim that lifestyle sans exercise and romance is taking a toll on society.

"Erratic and late night shifts can raise a woman's risk of menstrual and fertility problems. Studies have also indicated that late shifts may increase the chances of a miscarriage," Dr. Priyamvada added.

Stating that many women are opting to conceive after

the age of 35, doctors note that most common cause of age-related decline in fertility is less frequent ovulation. As women age, they begin to have occasional cycles where an egg is never released. Egg quality and quantity also declines in a woman's 30s and 40s.

"Stress brought on by irregular and long work hours, putting off natural pregnancy and bad lifestyle is playing havoc with young women," notes Dr. Sunita Varma, di-

rector of Obstetrics/Gynaecology Department at Fortis Hospital in Shalimar Bagh.

"Stress, accompanied by unhealthy lifestyle, is known to cause high blood pressure and diabetes. We are seeing a rise in cases of polycystic ovary syndrome [PCOS], which can affect a woman's hormone levels, periods, and ovulation and interfere with natural pregnancy," she adds.

By Bindu Shajan Perappadan