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A SPECIAL ADVERTISING REPORT

FERTILITY

Easy test a big help

IF you've been thinking of having a baby, then there's a clever little product that just might help to make things a little easier, especially as there is only a small window of opportunity in which you can conceive each month.

Women can only fall pregnant around the time of ovulation, so it's important to know when that time is, and this is where Maybe Baby can assist.

Maybe Baby is a mini-microscope which uses saliva to pinpoint ovulation, helping predict when you are most likely to conceive.

Scientists have proven that saliva viewed through a microscope enables you to see increases in estrogen levels that rise two to three days before ovulation and peak on the day of ovulation.

The size of a lipstick, Maybe Baby is easy to use, convenient, accurate and non-invasive.

It's as simple as applying a small amount of saliva to the lens, waiting for it to dry and looking through the viewfinder to see patterns indicating whether you're in the fertile period or not. A fern pattern signifies the time is

right to try for a baby, while a pebble pattern indicates the non-fertile period.

Expectant first mum Caroline Nikiforidis is a satisfied Maybe Baby customer: "When the time was right to start a family, I was very interested to hear about this no mess no fuss product. Maybe Baby really guided me on what were the right days to conceive and to our luck and joy we are now awaiting our first baby."

Additionally, if you're also interested in influencing the baby's gender, knowing your ovulation time may also be useful. This is due to the fact that male sperm swim faster but die sooner, whereas female sperm swim slower but live longer. This knowledge may help influence the gender of the child conceived.

The unique aspect of Maybe Baby is that it reveals ovulation time three to four days before the day of ovulation, meaning if you try for a baby during these days you may increase the chance of having a girl, whereas if you have intercourse on ovulation day, the probability of a boy is heightened.



IVF treatment offers hope

FERTILITY is not something that can be taken for granted. One in six couples will have difficulty in conceiving a child. If a couple has been attempting to conceive for a year without success, they should see a doctor to find out what the problem is.

If a woman is over 35, she should see a doctor after five or six months of trying to conceive. Time can be an important factor.

An option for some couples to consider is in vitro fertilisation (IVF).

According to Monash IVF - one of the nation's as well as the world's leading IVF institutes - a woman is often infertile (unable to become pregnant) because of diseased or damaged fallopian tubes.

It is estimated that one third of such infertility is a female problem, one third a male problem and one third when both male and female have a problem.

Women entering an IVF treatment cycle have daily blood tests to determine the maturity of the eggs which are developed in the ovaries.

When the blood tests indicate that the woman's eggs have reached a certain degree of maturity, she will have to have an ultrasound to find out how many follicles (blisters on the ovary containing the egg) are developing. The ultrasound will also show how soon the follicles are about to release the egg.

A very fine needle is threaded through a guide which searches, finds and then pierces the follicle and extracts the egg. The fluid is taken to a laboratory and the egg found. This continues with other follicles.

Precision timing is vital. Each egg is washed in a special fluid where it remains to mature further. The partner then provides a sample of semen. When the time is considered appropriate a droplet of semen containing 50,000 sperms are added to each test tube.

The pre-embryo is transferred into a woman's uterus through a catheter, a painless procedure which requires no anaesthetic. A few weeks later blood tests indicate whether the embryo has successfully implanted, in which case the woman is pregnant.