

Breaking News: West Coast Fertility Centers Offers an Alternative to Storing or Discarding Surplus Embryos

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A recent report on CBS's weekly news magazine "60 Minutes" indicates that there is a backlog of unused embryos -- 400,000 -- that are being stored, indefinitely, at fertility clinics throughout the nation. This has caused concern and controversy for a variety of reasons. There are groups who feel that excess embryos should be used for medical research. Others feel the embryos should be given up for "adoption" to couples that are having a difficult time conceiving. Couples who have undergone a successful IVF procedure and have completed their family are faced with a very difficult choice of what to do with their embryos if they don't want to discard or donate them. There is a viable new option ... egg freezing.

Couples undergoing in vitro fertilization, who prefer not to freeze their embryos can elect to have a few of their eggs fertilized to create a specific number of embryos to transfer during their IVF procedure and freeze the remaining unfertilized eggs for future use. While men have been able to freeze their sperm for years, the process of freezing, thawing and fertilizing female eggs is a major breakthrough for couples who do not want to be faced with a religious or ethical dilemma of what to do with surplus embryos.

West Coast Fertility Centers, based in Fountain Valley, California, is one of a few fertility centers offering egg freezing and that has succeeded in achieving a live birth. A second frozen egg birth is expected next month, with three additional pregnancies on the way. No embryos were discarded while achieving these pregnancies.

"Egg freezing is certainly a viable solution to the dilemma raised by the CBS Sixty Minute report," states Dr. David Diaz, Medical Director for West Coast Fertility Centers. Diaz explains that, "Freezing our patients unfertilized eggs helps them with the difficult decision of what to do with fertilized embryos should they decide their family is complete." Diaz continues, "During my 18 years of working with couples, the decision to discard embryos is one of the toughest decisions a family has to face."

West Coast Fertility Center has established an Egg Banking Program, similar to sperm banking, to assist women wishing to "bank" the eggs while they are the healthiest in order to preserve their fertility. Career women or those who haven't found "Mr. Right" can essentially put their biological clocks on hold.

Dr. Diaz has worked with many patients to help them preserve, and eventually use, these healthy eggs. The Center currently is working with oncologists to help women and men preserve their fertility prior to undergoing cancer treatment. The Center has one live frozen egg birth and five ongoing pregnancies.

Last October one of Dr. Diaz's patients, Barbara, gave birth to a healthy baby girl who was conceived from a frozen egg. Rachel from Anaheim, California, has one healthy baby girl thanks to Dr. Diaz's help. At that time she decided to freeze the remaining eggs that had been harvested. She returned to Dr. Diaz's office in 2005, had the frozen eggs "thawed" and inseminated with her husband's sperm, and she is now pregnant with her second child.

Linda Leal, a thirty-five year old professional woman from San Francisco, discovered West Coast Fertility Center's Web site while researching the benefits of egg freezing. She went to the Center a month later and her healthy eggs were safely frozen. "I really felt a sense of urgency to freeze my eggs once I learned the reality of conceiving a baby at an older age," said Leal.

She continued, "The procedure I underwent at West Coast Fertility Centers was very smooth and I felt confident with the staff's knowledge and comfortable in the Center's family atmosphere." Now that her eggs are safely frozen, Leal looks forward to completing the implantation procedure "at the right time."

Dr. Diaz explains that, "Egg banking, much like sperm banking, can be used for women who seek to delay pregnancy or prefer egg freezing versus embryo freezing for religious and ethical reasons."

West Coast Fertility Centers is among a small number of fertility centers in the nation to record a birth from previously frozen eggs. There have been only about 100 babies born worldwide from frozen eggs.

Orange County Medical Association recently selected Dr. Diaz as a 2006 Physician of Excellence, based upon his educational credentials, teaching and clinical research, and community service. For more than 17 years, Dr. Diaz has pioneered many advances in the specialty of infertility and fertility preservation. For more information about Dr. David Diaz and West Coast Fertility Centers, visit www.ivfbaby.com or to learn how you can preserve your fertility visit, www.eggfreezing.com. **Call 714-513-1399 to schedule an appointment.**