



RABBI GIDEON

**Machon Puah for Fertility and
Gynecology in Accordance with Halacha**

WEITZMAN

One Egg, One Child?

Last time we discussed the relatively new technology of egg freezing, which appears to be an excellent option for unmarried women who want to extend their fertility as they get older.

But the reality is more complex than it initially seems, since there is no guarantee of success attached to this procedure. While some may think that freezing one egg will result in the birth of one child, the reality is far from this simple equation. In fact, most women will need to freeze numerous eggs in order to achieve a pregnancy.

And so the golden question is how many eggs are needed for one child? There is no clear answer to this question, and it depends on many factors. For example, the age of the woman is extremely significant, since the quality of the eggs decreases as the woman's age increases. Another important factor is previous medical history, and the general medical status of the woman freezing the eggs.

In addition to the quality of the eggs, it must be stressed that these eggs can only be used in an in-vitro fertilization (IVF). The woman who froze the eggs and subsequently gets married, can thaw the eggs at a later stage and then fertilize them in

the laboratory. As in any other IVF, the fertilized eggs then develop in the lab under observation. Some of the eggs will not fertilize, and those that do will not all develop and divide as expected. Some of the fertilized eggs will not make it to the stage of a more developed egg, called a blastocyst, which is really a rapidly growing ball of cells, but others will not. Of those fertilized eggs that do develop in a proper manner, one or two of the best fertilized eggs will be transferred to the woman's body, but not all of these will continue to develop in the uterus and become a fetus that will eventually develop into a human being.

From this brief description of the process of IVF, it becomes apparent that the success of IVF is not extremely high. In fact, even in ideal conditions the chances of having a child with IVF are about 20-30%. In other words, in over 70% of the cases the IVF will not be successful. When dealing with older eggs the success rates decrease. And so, it should be clear that freezing one egg will not necessarily result in having a child.

So how many eggs are needed in order to have a child?

More on this next time. ■

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