



# AGE



## Your body gets in on the baby decision

How does your age affect the health of a pregnancy and a future baby? Is there a prime time to put your sperm or eggs to biological use? Many of us might like to think the answer is as simple as a 5 year age span (age 25-30) – so the decision of when to have kids is not so hard to make. Our bodies make it for us. But that is not so. Older can work. And younger can work. But the body has its limits. Just because you can become pregnant, that does not mean the pregnancy will be a healthy one.

### *Biological clock – antique or younger model?*

Most women and men at any age have healthy uncomplicated pregnancies and healthy babies. But you might want to think about the facts below before making your decision.

- ❖ A pregnant woman in her teens, whose body is still growing and developing, might compete with a growing baby for food and energy.
- ❖ Your chances of getting pregnant are higher before your mid-thirties. Between the 30's and 40's your reproductive system will naturally age.
- ❖ Both mothers and fathers over age 40 have an increased chance of having a child with Downs Syndrome.

- ❖ Problems during pregnancy like diabetes and high blood pressure happen more often with older women.

### *The test of time – or age*

Check the word that makes the statement true for you.

- ❖ Because of my age it  *may*  *may not* be difficult to get pregnant and carry it through.
- ❖ My age  *does*  *does not* increase the chance of problems throughout pregnancy and birth.
- ❖ My body  *has*  *has not* finished developing.
- ❖ I  *am*  *am not* in an age group more likely to be poorly nourished (teens).
- ❖ I  *am*  *am not* at an age which has allowed me to develop responsibility and mature decision making skills through life experiences such as education, care of other family members and employment.

How did you do? There are no right answers or wrong answers to the statements above. You and your pen will have helped you discover how close you are to making a decision about building a family that is best for you.

### *My age won't matter if...*

- ❖ I understand how my age can affect my pregnancy.
- ❖ I have a healthy lifestyle that will help prevent pregnancy problems related to age risks.
- ❖ I will talk to a health care provider before making my final decision to try to conceive a baby.
- ❖ I will read more about age and pregnancy, including information about being ready for parenting, finances, fertility, tobacco, drugs and beliefs about parenting.
- ❖ I will talk to my partner about how a child might fit into our lives at different ages and stages of our personal and work life.

#### FOR HELP CLOSE TO HOME CONTACT:

Health care provider: \_\_\_\_\_

Local public health unit: Call INFOLine at 1-800-268-1154 / 416-341-5518 \_\_\_\_\_

Genetic clinic: \_\_\_\_\_

Fertility clinic: \_\_\_\_\_