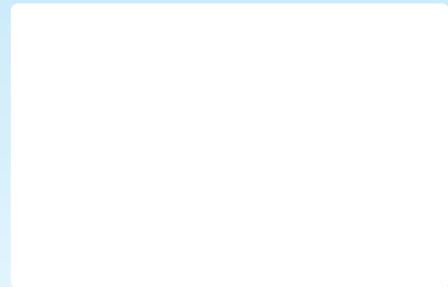


PlanAhead™

Measure your
biological clock



Lifestyle Choices Ltd

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LIFESTYLE®
CHOICES

If you're planning to have a baby but struggling to decide when, Plan Ahead™ from Lifestyle Choices can help you make a more informed decision.

Developed at one of the UK's foremost science universities, by one of the UK's leading fertility experts, our new triple test is one of the most accurate hormone tests available in the world today, helping you understand more about your biological clock and whether you should try for a baby now rather than wait.

Planning Your Family

For some women, the decision about whether to have a first or subsequent child is taken from them by 'happy accidents', or perhaps because they cannot conceive. For others, the 'right time' is difficult to assess – Have we got enough money? Is the house big enough? Should we wait until the baby is out of nappies before trying for another? Do I want to return to work? Am I too old?

Nowadays, it is common for women to postpone having children until their thirties. While this will not present problems to some, other women in this age group will find it increasingly difficult to conceive.



15% of first time mothers in the UK are now over 35

Your biological clock

The term 'biological clock' describes the decline in a woman's fertility as she grows older. It is a useful concept, but does not give the whole picture: the clock does not tick away at a constant rate while fertility gradually declines; it speeds up at about the age of 35, then comes to a halt as a woman passes through the menopause.

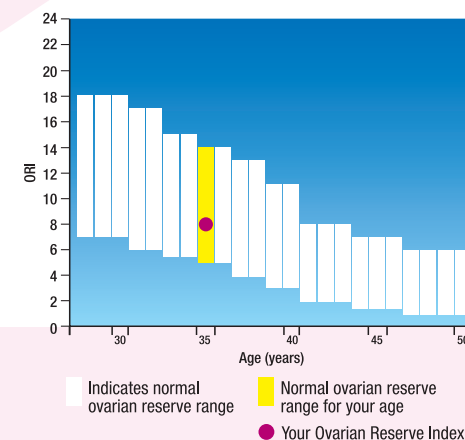
High profile celebrities having children in their 40's give the perception that our bodies have changed, that we can all have children later in life, and that science is making it safer. But this is not the case. Although over the last 20 years our lifestyles have changed dramatically, our biological clocks haven't, and they continue to tick just as before.

However every woman's 'clock' is different; in some women, the clock starts to run down much sooner than average, perhaps in their 20's. In others, it might keep going well into their 40's.

So how can you tell how fast your clock has been ticking so that you can plan when to start or grow your family?

Plan Ahead™ tests for three hormones to compare the estimated number of eggs remaining in your ovaries with the average range that would be expected for your age. This result is provided to you as an Ovarian Reserve Index (see example below). Knowing how you compare with the 'norm' can help you decide how long you can wait before trying for a baby.

Ovarian Reserve Index (ORI) example:



The Plan Ahead™ test

What is the Plan Ahead™ test?

The Plan Ahead™ test combines the measurement of the hormones Inhibin B, Anti-Müllerian Hormone (AMH) and Follicle Stimulating Hormone (FSH). The FSH measurement has been used to assess ovarian decline for many years, but levels only change at the late stages of ovarian reserve. Combining FSH with Inhibin B and AMH can give an “early warning” of the risk of reduced ovarian reserve to women.

Analysis of these levels provides a predictive assessment of your ovaries (your Ovarian Reserve Index) which is then plotted against the average range that you would expect for your age. The Ovarian Reserve Index enables you to see the relative position of your biological clock and whether you need to try for a family sooner rather than late.

We recommend that a women has a test every two years from the age of 30 onwards so she can continue to accurately measure the relative position of her biological clock.

FSH (Follicle Stimulating Hormone)

FSH is a pituitary hormone that is excellent for estimating how close a woman is to menopause. However, FSH concentrations can fluctuate from month to month, and concentrations tend to only rise when menopause is close. A simple FSH test cannot accurately identify early signs of decreasing ovarian reserve, so cannot give an accurate estimate of the number of eggs in the ovaries.

Inhibin B

Inhibin B is a hormone produced by the growing egg follicles themselves. The levels of inhibin B measured in the early part of the menstrual cycle reflect the number of follicles that are starting to develop. This gives a more direct estimate of ovarian reserve than FSH and importantly, because the levels of inhibin B fall relatively early as ovarian reserve declines, it is an important marker of ovarian reserve for women in their 30's.

AMH (Anti-Mullerian Hormone)

AMH is another hormone released by small egg follicles as they begin to develop in the the ovary. Recent research has shown that levels of AMH reflect the state of the ovarian reserve. Again, levels of this hormone fall relatively early in the process of loss of ovarian reserve and provide a third, independent, estimate of the number of eggs in your ovaries.

The Plan Ahead™ test requires a small sample of your blood to be taken by a nurse or doctor on day 2 or 3 of your period. The sample is sent in a pre-addressed, pre-paid envelope to our laboratory for analysis. The price does not include the cost of obtaining a blood sample, which you can obtain from your local GP's surgery (which may or may not charge) or from a private clinic. Your Ovarian Index result will normally arrive by post within 14 to 21 days of us receiving your sample.

A guide to female fertility

Why does age affect a woman's fertility?

There are many factors affecting a woman's fertility including illness or disease, drug treatments, accidents, smoking and pollution. All can make it more difficult to conceive or carry children. But a woman's fertility also reduces naturally with age: not only does the number of her eggs decline, but so does their quality, making it less likely that any remaining eggs will become fertilized and develop normally.

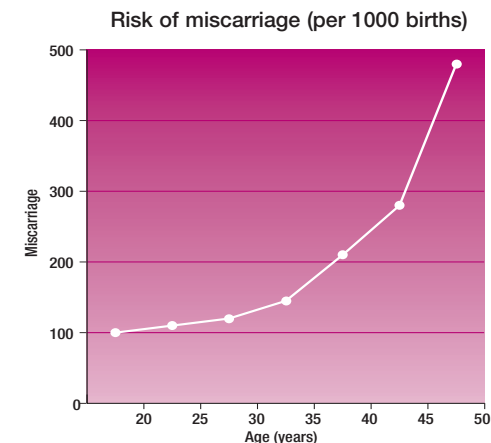
Declining egg number

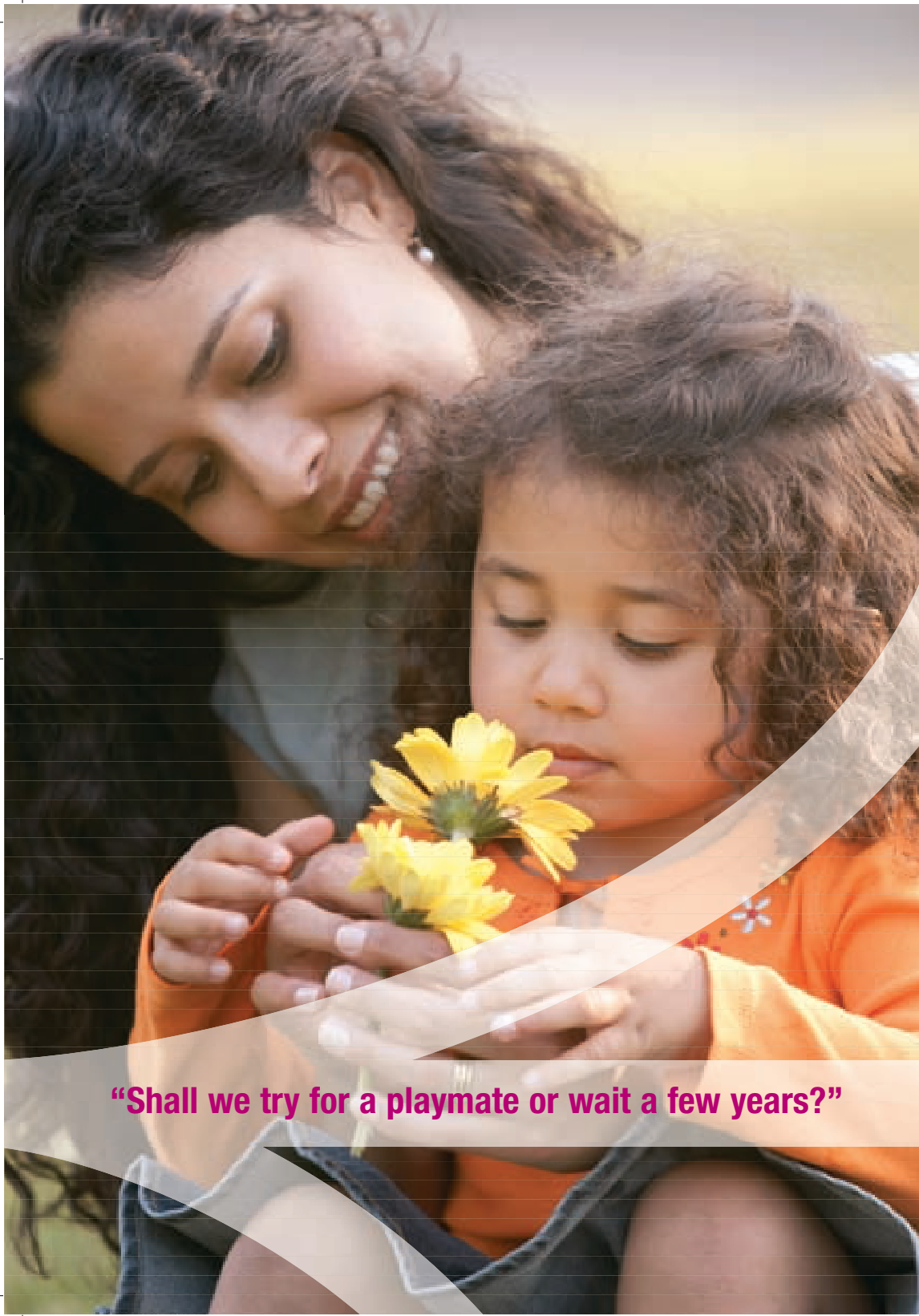
Most women are born with about 2 million eggs in their ovaries. By the time they reach puberty, almost 90% of these eggs have died and by the time she reaches twenty, only about 50,000 of the original 2 million eggs remain. This decline usually continues steadily until around the age of 35, at which point the rate of loss speeds up dramatically. This means that there are increasingly fewer eggs available for fertilization as the average woman ages beyond 35.

Declining egg quality

During a woman's normal cycle, the body selects the 'best' eggs to ripen for fertilization. So, each month at least one healthy egg is passed during menstruation (the monthly period). So gradually, unless a woman conceives, the 'best' eggs are discarded by the body. Those that remain have grown older, and are possibly lower quality, making them less likely to become fertilized and develop into a healthy baby.

Although an older egg can sometimes become fertilized, there is a greater risk of miscarriage or birth abnormalities due to chromosomal defects. It may be that the reduced fertility seen with aging is therefore part of the body's natural 'safety mechanism'.





“Shall we try for a playmate or wait a few years?”

How to buy the Plan Ahead™ test

Mail order: telephone 0114 275 5723

Online: www.boots.com
www.planaheadtest.com

Direct from: leading private clinics & GP's
(call for details)

Other information you should know

- Women taking the contraceptive pill cannot take the test until their second normal period after stopping the pill (please telephone 0114 275 5723 if you are not sure)
- Women with irregular periods (outside a cycle of 27-35 days) should telephone 0114 275 5723 for advice before purchasing the test.
- Women using the Mirena coil, contraceptive implants and contraceptive injections will be unable to take the test.
- Women who are nursing cannot take the Plan Ahead test for 12 months after nursing has finished
- The test cannot be taken within six months of a pregnancy.

IMPORTANT NOTE - The Plan Ahead™ test assesses the quantity of eggs in a woman's ovaries. It does not measure their quality or your ability to conceive, which can be affected by many other factors. Although the Plan Ahead™ test uses the most up-to-date technology available in the market, before making any decisions based on the test results you should seek medical advice from your GP or a specialist clinic. If you have any concerns about your fertility it is also important that you seek medical advice from your GP or a specialist clinic. The information provided in this leaflet is for educational purposes only and it should not be relied upon for any other purpose. Lifestyle Choices do not accept any liability for any losses or damages suffered by anyone acting in reliance on this information or the results of the Plan Ahead™ test.