



## PREPARING TO GROW YOUR FAMILY

### **Mazal tov on your engagement!**

This time of planning your wedding and your life together is exciting and full of potential. Something you may already have talked about is having children. Bringing a new life into the world is one of the most holy and beautiful endeavors.

Planning for children raises a lot of questions - when to get started, how many children, where to live, finances, schools, Jewish life and education. Now is a good time to start talking about all of these issues and how you might respond should you face obstacles along the way to parenthood.

For some, conception is an easy process but for others it is more challenging. Infertility, fertility challenges, pregnancy loss, medical issues, and genetic diseases are important topics to consider before you find yourself unexpectedly facing them. Hasidah is available to provide you resources for planning to have a family and support should you face challenges.

### **Judaism & Fertility**

The first commandment in the Torah is to be fruitful and multiply. Fertility is a natural and holy part of the human experience. The inability to participate in the ways we hoped can affect faith and connection to the Jewish community.

From the promise to Abraham, the first Jew, to have numerous offspring to the family based holidays celebrated today, family and children are the core of Jewish life. So too the struggle to have a child is a recurring theme from the Bible to today. Fertility reflects God's ultimate power and the deepest human desire. Consequentially, infertility raises a lot of questions. Relationships with others community and God, lack of control, and worthiness are some of the many issues that infertility exposes. They are related to religious beliefs which have often not been previously explored.

The word Hasidah is Hebrew for stork and its root is *hesed*/loving-kindness. Nothing could reflect the Jewish meaning of loving-kindness than to help someone facing infertility with support and dignity.

### **For Support & Additional Information**

[www.hasidah.org](http://www.hasidah.org)

425.323.3226

[info@hasidah.org](mailto:info@hasidah.org)

@JewishStork

Facebook Support  
Group:  
Jewish Stork Support



***Build Jewish Families***

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### Family Building Challenges: Now You Know

Fact: 1 in 8 couples face challenges having a baby. Infertility is defined as the inability to conceive after twelve months of trying for women under 35 or after six months for women over 35, or the inability to carry a pregnancy to live birth (e.g. recurrent pregnancy loss). Many other issues such as genetic diseases can also make family building challenging. Infertility is even harder to face when it is experienced in isolation or the cost of treatment, which can easily be in the tens of thousands, is a barrier to parenthood. Infertility can also place strain on marital intimacy and friendships. Hasidah is a resource in the Jewish community to address these issues.

#### A Plan to Grow Your Family

You have a check list to plan your wedding; building your family takes some planning too. Here are some things to consider as you start this journey:

1. Genetic screening - many Jewish genetic diseases can be discovered before pregnancy. Please get Jewish genetic screening through [JScreen](#) or your healthcare provider
2. Questions for partners:
  - Would you consider other options if natural conception was not possible?
  - Would you ever consider medical treatment, adoption or foster children?
  - Are you aware of any conditions that may affect your fertility?

#### Infertility and Family Building Support

If you find yourselves experiencing issues with fertility or want to provide support to someone else, Hasidah is a resource for you in the Jewish community. Hasidah programs include:

- Peer support, spiritual care, group programs, information and referrals
- Speaking, teaching and training (available for travel)
- IVF funding
- More resources and programs available on our website: [www.hasidah.org](http://www.hasidah.org)

#### Be A Good Friend

Once you are aware of infertility, it is everywhere. You are likely to have friends who have or will experience it. You can be supportive by acting with sensitivity and care towards those facing infertility challenges.

1. Stay connected to them so they do not feel isolated.
2. Listen. Tell them you care or that you are sorry this is happening.
3. Avoid advice. Ultimately each person/couple has to decide what is best for them.
4. Educate yourself so they don't have to explain the details.
5. If they are going through treatment, send a note to tell them you are thinking of them.