



Royal

BABY BLUES

THE WORLD MAY BE GOING GAGA FOR THE LATEST BABY NEWS, BUT THE PITTER-PATTER OF FAMOUS LITTLE FEET HAS BECOME A DEAFENING REMINDER FOR WOMEN STRUGGLING WITH INFERTILITY

WITH Prince George's arrival sparking royal cases of the baby blues, a Gold Coast IVF specialist says it's time to start talking about fertility.

One woman posted her royal baby envy on Australia's largest female blog, Mammamia, saying the news had left many "secretly feeling sad or inadequate or envious, or a complex cocktail of melancholy they don't even know how to articulate".

Dr Kee Ong, who is based at the Allamanda Medical Centre, says one in six Australian couples are struggling to conceive.

"Fertility starts to drop off from the age of 35 so realising your dream to start a family and the ability to conceive is not always a given," Dr

Ong says. "Most people don't know they have fertility issues until they try to have a baby and too many women simply leave it too late.

"Every woman should have a fertility check by 30 years of age. This isn't about pressuring women to have babies younger, it's about letting women know there are simple tests and checks that will give them crucial information about their fertility health."

Dr Ong is focused on educating hopeful parents about the biggest determining factor when it comes to starting a family: time.

"In today's society women aren't necessarily in a rush to start a family," he says.

"But it doesn't matter if you're fit and healthy or if you have a regular menstrual cycle, age is the most common cause of infertility and a woman's eggs have an expiry date."

Many women are unaware that a simple blood test can reveal the quantity of eggs in their ovaries and give them a realistic timeline on their ability to conceive.

"I want to encourage people to be more pro-active about planning for their family future," Dr Ong says.

"Whether it's delaying babies for a successful business career, or if Mr Right is in the wrong place, women in their late 20s and early 30s should be planning now."

Egg freezing has many women putting their baby hopes on ice and is only one option providing an insurance policy against possible heartbreak later in life.

While the science is still emerging, Dr Ong says late 20s early 30s is the best time to think about egg freezing, especially if you're not planning to have children soon.

"The key is to freeze them before their quality diminishes, roughly around the age of 33," he says.

Dr Ong says egg freezing does not guarantee pregnancy and is not right for everyone.

Freezing 12 eggs before the age of 35 will give you more than 50 per cent chance of having a baby, but after the age of 40 will only give a 7 per cent chance of success.

"The fertility journey is different for everyone, the important thing is that we start the dialogue with younger women now and at the very least, encourage women and couples to talk openly to their doctors about their fertility."