

Dr Marisa López-Teijón

I want to get pregnant now!

The essential guide
to fertility



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I want to get pregnant now!

You have decided that you want to get pregnant; that now is the moment you have been thinking about for so long. Now you feel that you have everything you thought you needed to be a mother. Maybe your desire to have a baby is so great that you have decided to sacrifice some of the things that you thought were essential in your life. Or maybe you have fallen head over heels in love with a man and you feel that he has to be the father of your children.

The probability of this moment arriving increases as you get older. The current trend of women in societies with a more advanced socio-cultural and economic level is to have few children and to postpone the age at which they become mothers. This situation can be seen every day in our surroundings and the statistics prove it.

Elisabeth is one of these women who really wants to have a baby. She cannot believe her luck: in the same month she has been promoted to the position of branch manager in her bank and her in-laws have given her enough money to pay off the outstanding

mortgage on the apartment! Unbelievable luck! She is the eldest of three sisters. Since she was a young girl she has dreamed about having children; however, for her that dream could only come true after finishing her studies, finding a good job, a stable partner and a three-bed apartment. Achieving all of this was not easy, and when this situation finally arose, she carefully gauged how much a baby could set all of the above off keel. I am referring to combining being a mother with having a career, the risks of losing out on promotions in work, of having no free time... And aware of all these factors, she has decided that it is worth it. She is convinced that a child is more important.

It is Saturday and **Marta** has been stood up. Her boyfriend tells her that he can't meet her for lunch. She sits down in the park beside the restaurant feeling exhausted, thinking: "What am I going to do now?" She is immersed in her thoughts when a girl approaches her. "Would you mind helping me?" she asks her as she places a baby in her arms before even getting a response and takes another one out of the buggy. Marta holds him –she couldn't do anything else–, smiles at him, and feels something indescribable. She is overcome by an uncontrollable desire to hug him, but she doesn't dare. She can't remember ever having held a baby before.

Marta always imagined her future with children, but she still saw it as something distant despite being 37. At that precise moment, she feels like her time has come: she really wants a baby although she is not sure that her boyfriend will want the same. And although only a few months ago this would all have seemed impossible to her, now she is willing to leave her partner and have a child on her own, if necessary.

Gynaecologists and paediatricians are surprised that nearly all couples reach the birth without ever having changed a nappy or knowing what the umbilical cord is. We wonder: "Have they never even minded a baby? Have they never wondered what their own belly

button is? What have they been thinking about for the past nine months?”

Additionally, often they are couples who know a lot about everything: they conscientiously prepare for any task, they read up on the film they're going to see before going to the cinema, they study guide books before embarking on a trip... Nevertheless, they have no idea about many of the details related to this tiny person who is going to change their life considerably more than a book or a holiday. This situation has a logical explanation. Knowing how to look after a child has always been something considered to be implicit in a woman's essence. Until rather recently, the woman looked after her younger siblings until she married, and a year later she started her own cycle of pregnancies and births.

And suddenly, without an intermediary generation, we are realising that the instinct of knowing how to look after a child has not remained impregnated in the genes of the females of our species, and that all those skills that were presumed to be innate and instinctive, have to be learned.

In this information society of master's degrees and online courses, with the most educated generation of young people in history, in which we study and sit exams for everything, it is taken for granted that without any preparation, parents will be experts in childcare; that we will know how to feed this new-born, and how to get it to stop crying inconsolably.

The most intense moment, the moment of greatest fulfilment, fear and expectation, is the day the new family is discharged from hospital after the first birth. Suddenly, the parents realise that they don't know how to look after the baby and they don't want to leave. They ask to be told about all of this immediately! If we could film it, it would be a comedy well worth seeing.

How many babies have you looked after?

As we have mentioned above, today, when the first child is born, often the parents have never looked after a baby. It is rare that anyone today has a much younger sibling. Their nieces and nephews, if they have any, are far away. There is no time to have an intense relationship with their friends' babies and, in general, the busy society in which we live has made us lose our passion for small children.

Rarely do we stop to admire how beautiful the baby next to us is. In shops, we get looked at if our children touch anything and hear things such as: "Be careful! We don't want them to get hurt". There are hotels that do not allow children (or dogs), and now there is a flight company that is going to promote child-free flights...

So the arrival home with the first child is a really difficult moment because babies do not come with an instruction manual.

Now I will tell you about **Rose**, who has just abandoned the group of young people who don't study or work, because she has got her first job: she's a gym instructor in Barcelona. Her salary is not enough for her to move out of her parents' house, but she can afford to stay on top of all her beauty whims. She has an incredible figure, she is pretty and wears all the accessories that her favourite blogger has flagged for this season. In the gym bar she has met a famous football player from the Barça team and they've gone on three dates. Today she has arranged to meet him again and she is nervous because she has decided to stop taking the pill and to see what happens... She is crazy about him and she wants absolutely everything with this man. Beforehand she had never even thought about whether or not she would like to have children, she doesn't even like children. When she told Lourdes, her best friend, what she was doing, she told her that she didn't understand why she wanted to get pregnant: "to me it seems like you're just looking for that guy's money and social position", she told her. And that is what it looked like. But Rose really was in love, with everything that word entails.

What requirements do each of us ask of a man so that he can be a

candidate for us to fall in love with and become the father of our children? Could he be a man much younger than you, much less educated or of a different race?

It is an entirely personal choice based on our principles, education, motivations of which we are not even aware, and our anthropological history. For many women, when they meet a man who they feel confident could raise their pack, that feminine instinct is aroused. On the contrary, men, when they fall in love, tend to feel the instinct to have sex with the woman, but not to raise children... They have been spreading their sperm for millions of years; however, raising children was not up to them.

I love Luis Huete's book *Construye tu sueño*. I highly recommend it because it describes the reasons that drive us. Each person has a different percentage of each motivation, and none is good or bad; it depends on how we manage it. Traditionally it is thought that the driving forces in the world are money, sex, and power. However, the author assures us that this is not the case and that these are the arms we use to achieve what we really want.

What drives you? How far would you be willing to go to achieve your greatest desire? Let us see what our protagonists do.