

People Say the Darndest Things: Responses to 10 Common Infertility Remarks

You and your partner have been trying to get pregnant for quite some time and it's not working. You're not sure who to talk to because not everyone understands infertility. Infertility is not only a widely misunderstood medical condition; its also one that is shrouded in secrecy and embarrassment. You're afraid those closest to you will say something that might hurt your feelings. You're tired of people asking you, "So, when are you two going to get pregnant?" Or, you let a few people know your predicament and they say something stupid.

Your initial reaction may be to defend yourself and your partner. This is a difficult topic to understand and very personal to the couple struggling with it. When a stranger, a friend, or even someone you love says something hurtful you may lash out at them or you may turn further inward. Instead, consider either an educational response or a "lighter" response to some of the common insensitive comments you may hear. Here are ten common comments that people make, and some suggested responses:

Just relax. This is a common remark from friends or family when you initially tell them you're having problems getting pregnant.

Response #1: Infertility is a disorder of the reproductive system. The emotions I feel about infertility are a result of our inability to conceive, not the cause of it.

Response #2: If only it were that easy! I wonder, would you offer the same advice to someone with another medical condition?

You'll get pregnant, it just takes time. Similar to the "relax" comment, this one is usually by someone who doesn't know much about infertility.

Response #1: On the contrary - if we wait too long before we seek assistance, our chances of becoming pregnant actually decrease.

Response #2: Yeah, but I'm tired of having sex because it's becoming a full-time job.

Take a vacation. You'll get pregnant; it happens all the time. Unfortunately, many people assume that relaxing or going on vacation can "cure" infertility.

Response #1: Our inability to get pregnant won't be cured with a vacation. It's most likely that our struggle to get pregnant has a medical explanation.

Response #2: If it happened all the time, there would be no need for fertility clinics!

Did you know that your diet can cause you to be infertile? Maybe you need to change what you are eating. Diet is becoming a hot topic with regard to infertility. This will be a common statement from nutritional consultants or people who sell nutritional products.

Response #1: You're right that diet can play a role in fertility. However, there are usually more than just dietary reasons.

Response #2: You're right. Perhaps if I just ate more, I'd at least look like I was pregnant.

I've heard that if you start the adoption process, you'll get pregnant. Adoption is not a cure for infertility, but many people who don't know the true emotional pain associated with not being able to create a child may say very insensitive things.

Response #1: Actually, that is a myth. Infertile couples are no more likely to become pregnant once they start the adoption process than they were before they started the process.

Response #2: That's because people repeat the one story they know of a woman who got pregnant while starting to adopt, and they neglect the nine other stories of people who went on to adopt and never got pregnant.

There are a lot of kids waiting for a good home, why don't you adopt? What the person who says this doesn't realize is that maybe you've considered this or maybe you don't want to, yet.

Response #1: We would really like to have biological children.

Response #2: We appreciate your concern, but we are not ready to consider adoption just yet.

Response #3: We want to adopt an infant, and there are actually more couples wanting to adopt than there are newborns who need parents.

Maybe you weren't meant to have kids. This type of comment may or may not be meant to be hurtful, but it is. Another alternative for this would be the "natural selection" argument. Rather than respond aggressively, better to educate, inform, and change topics quickly. This person might just be looking for a debate.

Response #1: Fertility treatments were invented to help people like me achieve parenthood. Infertility is just like any other disease and we deserve a right to achieve our dreams. Your comment is very hurtful; please be more compassionate.

Response #2: But the child abuser and the woman addicted to meth are? I fail to see your logic.

Be thankful you cannot have kids. Think of all things you can do and enjoy without the hassle of children. Sometimes people don't think before they speak. Often this comment stems from someone who has had a bad parenting experience or didn't want children. Don't comment on their regrets or options. Instead, focus on defusing their hurtful comment.

Response #1: I'd love the opportunity to experience the "hassle" of having a child. I know that I'll love being a parent and my partner will love a child too.

Response #2: I'm sad to hear you feel that way. Millions of couples would love the opportunity to be in your shoes.

You're just not having sex enough or you're not timing your intercourse properly. As if discussing infertility isn't already difficult enough, having someone critique your love life is not only embarrassing for you, it is very inappropriate on their part.

Response #1: It's likely that there are real medical reasons we have not become pregnant yet. It has nothing to do with our sex life.

Response #2: Is that something about the birds and the bees? I must have missed sex education class.

It only takes one sperm to fertilize an egg. If someone has never dealt with male factor infertility, it's unlikely that they would fully understand the complexities of conception.

Response #1: You are correct, but it takes millions of sperm to allow that ONE to reach and fertilize the egg.

Response #2: That's true, but that one hasn't showed up yet for us.

There will be times that you will want to make a spiteful comment to the person who said something inconsiderate. Often times you might regret being as unkind to them as they were hurtful to you; especially if they didn't do so intentionally and you did. Take a deep breath and determine if you want your response to create further tension or if you desire to educate and inform.

About the Author

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[Tiny Toes.](#)

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