

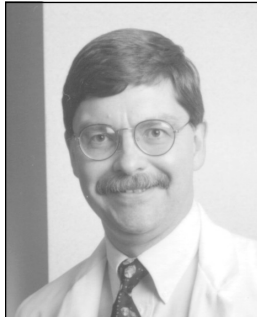
# The Center for Advanced Reproductive Services



Fertility Testing & Treatment • IVF • Counseling • Egg & Sperm Donor Programs • Pregnancy Loss Evaluation

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## Referring to a Specialist... When is the Best Time?

By Donald B. Maier, M.D.  
Lead Physician at The Center,  
Chief of Division of Reproductive  
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A question that causes disagreement between ob/gyns and reproductive endocrinologists is that of when to refer patients to the RE. In truth, there is no one correct answer. For a specific couple, the best time will depend on their particular circumstances, and also the interests and skills of both the referring ob/gyn and the infertility specialist. There are certain areas that should be considered in making that decision, and what follows are those that seem the most important to me.

**The woman's age:** The older the woman, the fewer treatment options she has and the less time to use them. She needs an accurate assessment of her chances of conception and the treatments that have proven efficient in the older woman. She does not have time on her side.

**The length of time the couple has been trying:** As with the woman's age, the length of attempting pregnancy is an important predictor of the chances of success. Besides being more frustrated by their years of trying, these couples may have a more significant cause of their infertility and may need more advanced treatments.

**The couple's insurance:** Some policies will only cover a specific number of treatment cycles. Patients who have used up their infertility coverage with suboptimal treatment are quite upset, once they have been referred, to find that a more effective therapy is now not covered by their insurance.

*Continued on the reverse*

## Our Success Rates – We're Doing Well & Always Striving to Improve!

We're very proud of our successes and our success rates. In fact, The Center's success rates and volume are among the best in the Northeast! Our published data for the year 2000 is as follows:

Live Birth Rate Per Embryo Transfer:

	Age			
	<35	35-37	38-40	>40
Live Birth Rate Per Embryo Transfer	45.2	36.6	36.9	22.9

Please remember to visit our website at: [www.fertilitycenter-uconn.org](http://www.fertilitycenter-uconn.org)

## Referring to a Specialist... When is the Best Time? (con't)

**Obvious serious infertility factors:** Patients who have had pelvic infections or surgery, or who have obvious endocrinopathies, will probably need the more advanced forms of treatment and this should not be delayed.

**Potential male factor:** Newer diagnostic tests and treatment options for male infertility are not

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Donald B. Maier, MD

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available to general gynecologists or even to most urologists. These cases should be referred to a center where there are individuals who deal with both male and female infertility, and who have access to all the available techniques.

**Tubal factor:** IVF has become much more successful than surgery in the treatment of most cases of tubal factor infertility.

**Number of cycles of treatment:** If a couple has not achieved a pregnancy within a certain number of months of treatment, they should be referred. While it is difficult to set an absolute number, I would advise referral after 6–9 months. Some specific treatments, such as use of clomiphene citrate, are rarely successful after 4–6 months and should not be continued indefinitely.

**The interest of the referring MD:** Some physicians have great interest in treating infertility; others have little or none. Patients need a physician who is interested in their problem and is willing to give them sufficient time and attention. They are much more likely to return for obstetrical care if they are referred out while they have a good relationship with their physician, and are less likely to return if they feel that their physician has not been interested in their infertility treatment.

**I would be interested in hearing from you about your thoughts on this important question. Please feel free to contact me via e-mail at [maier@nso1.uchc.edu](mailto:maier@nso1.uchc.edu) or by snail mail at the address on the front.**