

REPRODUCTIVE RESOURCE CENTER | OVERLAND PARK, KANSAS

# expecting the best

MOST WOMEN SPEND A PORTION OF THEIR LIVES trying to avoid pregnancy. Most can even recall the fear instilled in them by their seventh-grade health teachers, who made it seem as though getting pregnant was as easy as chewing gum. | But many couples find that once the time is right, having a baby isn't as easy as they once understood it to be. And seeking the best treatment facility for infertility can be a very difficult and daunting task. This is something the doctors and staff at the Reproductive Resource Center of Greater Kansas City recognize.

STORY BY QUINN KATHERMAN PHOTO BY JENNY WHEAT



## OCTUPLETS ARE NOT THE NORM

Dr. Celeste Brabec is a specialist in reproductive endocrinology and infertility and has been with the RRC since 1999. At the RRC, Dr. Brabec, Dr. Lyles, founder of RRC and also a board certified reproductive endocrinologist, and Dr. Wilson, the board certified high-complexity laboratory director, work toward a common goal.

"Our goal is to maximize pregnancy rates, while at the same time minimize multiple pregnancy rates. Blastocyst transfer is designed to accomplish that goal," Brabec says.

Blastocyst embryo transfer for IVF involves culturing embryos for five days instead of the traditional three days. This extended culture period enables further development of the embryos, which allows doctors to determine the healthiest embryos to implant into the uterus. **Selecting only one or two of the highest quality embryos increases the embryo's chances while decreasing the chances of a multiple pregnancy.**

"We are probably the only program who exclusively does day five blastocyst embryo transfer. It's a more difficult technique which requires more time, energy and resources of our embryology staff," Brabec says.

RRC was one of the first centers in the region to offer blastocyst transfer, and given their high success rates, they are now regarded as an authority on the technique.

"The couples who come to see us want to have a healthy baby. So we try very hard to help them reach that goal, but responsibly," Brabec says.

## MYTHS AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS

With a plethora of information on infertility treatments and continuous media coverage of multiple births, it can be difficult to decipher fact from fiction. The most common misconception is the belief that fertility treatments do not work.

**"Most couples who seek treatment with a fertility specialist will have success and most will take home a healthy baby,"** Brabec says.

According to the Society for Assisted Reproductive Technology, the RRC has a live birth rate of 57 percent for women 35 years old and younger and a 51 percent live birth rate for women age 35 to 37. However, Brabec says couples need to consider more than just statistical data as each clinic varies in the types of patients they accept and the cases they report.

Another myth Brabec typically combats is the idea that all infertility treatments are expensive. "Maintaining high pregnancy rates results in lower costs for our patients, which they love," Brabec says. The RRC offers a wide range of treatment options and it is their goal to help couples achieve conception as efficiently as possible.

A successful fertility treatment does not mean you have to risk a multiple pregnancy. With the successful implementation of blastocyst transfers, the RRC's average number of embryos transferred is fewer than two, Brabec says.

"Those who have done their homework come here. And if we do our job right, which of course we do, our patients are not our patients for long—with pregnancy they go on to see their obstetrician," Brabec says.

## EXPECT THE BEST FROM YOUR DOCTOR

Dr. Brabec admits that she doesn't have the easiest job, but she does feel as though it is the most rewarding.

"What brings me the most joy about my job is that it truly allows me to fully live and breathe the depths of human existence and emotion," Brabec says. **"Together, my patients and I have been given a gift, which is the opportunity to experience the full breadth of humanity,** from its small defeats and tear-wrenching agonies to its simple joys and most joyous wonders, like the birth of their first child."

But knowing the number of unwanted and unplanned pregnancies can be difficult when she has to watch her own patients struggle with their desire to conceive every day. Despite this, Brabec has a strong understanding of her role and the effect she has on her patients turned parents.

"I've learned that the little things are the big things; the little moments are what give life meaning in its deepest sense. I am truly honored to know that women have chosen me and entrusted me to help them with their most honorable pursuit – that of starting a family," Brabec says.

## FACTS AND STATS TO KNOW

The abundant statistical data available on fertility should not be used alone to make a decision as there are a lot of factors contributing to the report results. The Society for Assisted Reproductive Technology's Web site helps patients locate and contact infertility clinics as well as view national and individual clinic IVF success rates. SART offers a useful tool in the form of an interactive map which allows you to select a state and then view the reports for every clinic listed and registered as a SART member.

**The most important data categories** to look at are Pregnancy Rate, Multiple Pregnancy Rate, Greater Than Twins and Average Number of Embryos Transferred.

Visit [www.sart.org/find\\_frm.html](http://www.sart.org/find_frm.html) for more information.

### THE REPRODUCTIVE RESOURCE CENTER OF GREATER KANSAS CITY

1-877-221-2323

12200 West 106th Street Suite 120

Overland Park, Kan. 66215

Hours: 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

[www.rrc.com](http://www.rrc.com)

## RRC'S SERVICES

The Reproductive Resource Center is an infertility and In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) clinic founded in 1988. And after 20 years of a successful practice, they are proud and responsible leaders in innovative treatment options for couples suffering from infertility.

"We provide comprehensive diagnostic testing and treatment for all causes of infertility, ranging from the most simple to the most complex," Brabec says.

- Ovulation induction
- Intra-uterine insemination
- In Vitro Fertilization
- Intracytoplasmic sperm injection
- Embryo cryopreservation
- Donor egg and donor sperm services
- Gestational carrier services
- Infertility surgery
- Reproductive Endocrinology
- Psychological services