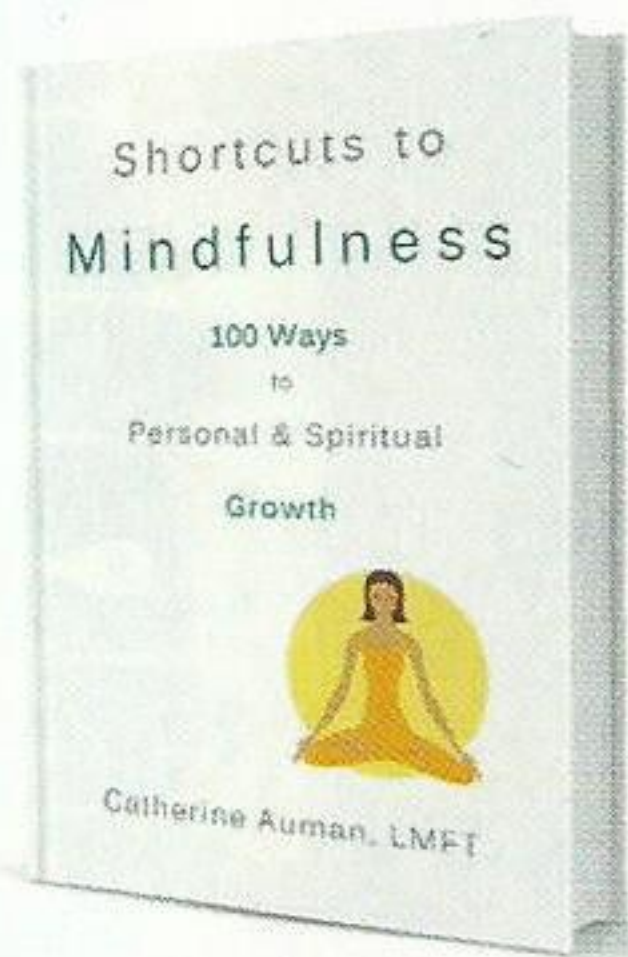


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PUTTING OFF PARENTHOOD

By Lisa Beebe

You can freeze your eggs to
free up your options

A popular tee shirt in the 1980s read, "Oh my God I forgot to have children." Indeed, between sexual liberation, divorce rates and expanded career and business options, many women have found themselves aging out of fertility and scrambling to start a late family any way they can.

There's been considerable criticism of their single-minded pursuit of motherhood, but now that companies such as Facebook and Apple have begun offering employees health care coverage for egg freezing, or cryopreservation, to allow women to preserve their eggs for future use, it's stirring up a different kind of debate. While some rejoice that the new benefit evens the playing field, allowing women to pursue their careers and postpone parenthood, others are concerned it pressures women to prioritize work over family. It's still an individual decision.

Who is the ideal candidate for egg freezing? According to Dr. Wendy Chang of the Southern California Reproductive Center, "The younger you are, the better quality your eggs are and the more likely you are to have a successful outcome after you thaw them."

Frozen eggs can be kept virtually indefinitely for use in the future, but there's no guarantee they'll ever result in a pregnancy. "The international pregnancy rate you can expect from egg freezing varies from

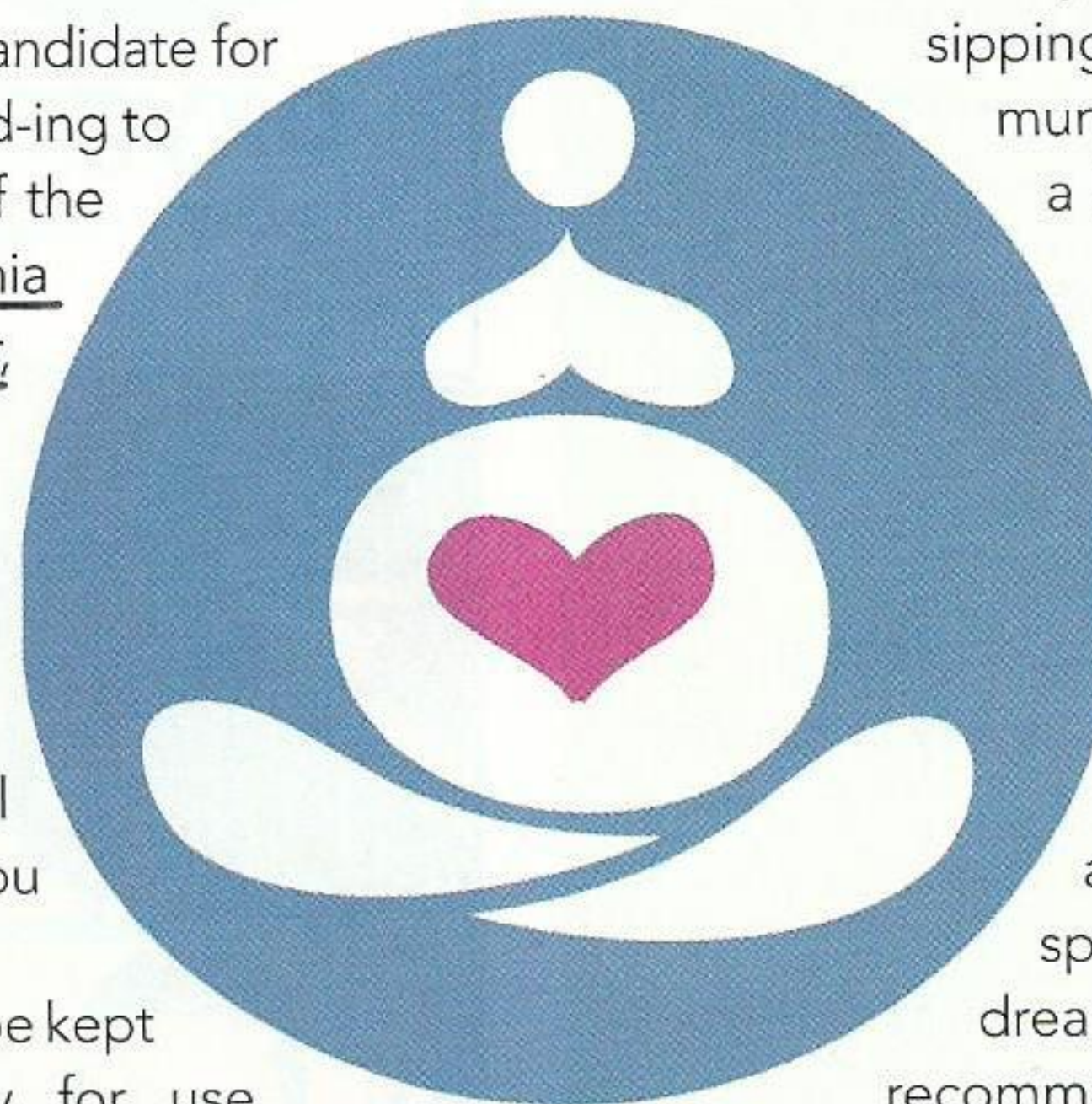
4-10 percent per egg, Dr. Chang explains. "That means if you freeze 10 eggs of good, mature quality, you can expect anywhere from 40 percent pregnancy rate or higher."

For best results it's recommended to have at least 10 to 20 eggs, but women who have weaker ovaries due to genetics or previous chemical exposure may produce only four or five eggs at a time. This is a limitation even if you are one of the lucky few with corporate coverage, because coverage is "usually one cycle, not multiple cycles," says Dr. Chang. "It's a nice benefit, but not absolutely comprehensive." In other words, there are no guarantees.

If you think egg freezing might be right for you, you can check it out at an Egg Social, courtesy of the Southern California Reproductive Center. These events offer the opportunity to learn about cryopreservation while sipping cocktails and munching appetizers at a local restaurant.

Whatever your childbearing plans, Dr. Chang emphasizes that frozen eggs should be considered a last resort. "If you freeze your eggs at 30, and meet the sperm source of your dreams at 35, we don't

recommend thawing your eggs and using them," she says. "We recommend taking advantage of whatever fertility you have at that moment."

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