

## The British Fertility Society – committed to providing good information for patients

By Professor Adam Balen, Chair of the [British Fertility Society](#)

As this year's Fertility Show is about to commence, once again many will come in search of evidence-based, up-to-date information, as well as support and advice on all fertility-related matters.

The British Fertility Society (BFS) will be on hand, as usual, to help them along their way. We aim to give visitors impartial advice on best practice – it's our job as healthcare professionals to ensure patients are well-informed.

As part of the programme of seminars, I will be discussing Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), a particularly common condition affecting 1 in 5 women in the UK. I [will be exploring](#) what is known about PCOS and the most effective ways of investigating and treating it. Other experts from the BFS will also be discussing [key topics](#), including what influences the success or failure of an IVF cycle, how to improve the odds of IVF success, how to deal with a diagnosis of unexplained infertility, and what men need to know about their fertility.

We know that there is a lack of reliable information in the public domain for patients and their families, as well as an array of misleading and confusing information. The BFS aims to counter that with impartial advice and information. We offer evidence-based, accurate and non-biased information to patients who are seeking more detail about treatments and a better understanding of more complex scientific issues.

We'll be handing out our [Patient Information](#) leaflets, which are also available on our website, including several new leaflets that address some topics we are frequently asked about.

[Age and its effect on fertility](#) is a much talked about topic, and our brand-new information leaflet provides a comprehensive overview of why fertility declines with age, how likely you are to get pregnant at different ages, and what you can do to boost your chances. Those for whom getting pregnant is not an option often ask us about [surrogacy](#), an area where there is very little good information. Our new leaflet fills that gap, providing an overview of what surrogacy involves and what the law states in this area. It also includes links to relevant external support organisations. For those who have a family history of genetic disorders, we have produced a new leaflet on [preimplantation genetic diagnosis \(PGD\)](#).

For many patients, there are important lifestyle changes that can increase their chances of conceiving, so we have also produced a quick guide with our [top ten tips for both men and women](#). For example, we recommend that people adopt a healthy lifestyle, undertake moderate exercise and give up smoking if possible.

As part of our drive to provide accurate information to patients and the wider public, the BFS is also working on a programme of work dedicated to improving knowledge of fertility and reproductive health in the UK, particularly among younger people. The recently formed [Fertility Education Initiative](#) is gaining momentum, and aims to address the lack of knowledge about the age-related decline in fertility.

We are well aware that one of the main things that patients worry about is how they will pay for fertility treatment, and we know this can place a huge amount pressure on couples and their families.

The BFS is extremely concerned that many Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are offering fewer cycles of IVF and going against the current NICE guidance. It is essential that treatment is made available on the NHS – the current situation is unacceptable. We are working closely with the Fertility Fairness campaign to try to improve this for the benefit of all our patients. I am also chairing a new committee for NHS England which has the long-term aim of achieving equitable access around the country.

We look forward to meeting those patients who are attending the Fertility Show. Our patient information leaflets are available to all, on our [website](#).

*The British Fertility Society will host a stand at the Fertility Show, 5–6 November at London Olympia, together with the British Infertility Counselling Association, the Association of Biomedical Andrologists, the British Andrology Society, and the Association of Clinical Embryologists.*