



RABBI GIDEON

**Machon Puah for Fertility and
Gynecology in Accordance with Halacha**

WEITZMAN

Freeze Your Eggs For Free

Recently several large companies such as Google and Meta announced that they would pay for their female workers to freeze eggs. This announcement was greeted with excitement, and a number of companies considered following suit and paying for this treatment.

Freezing eggs has become more popular in recent years but can be quite expensive. While many single women would like to avail themselves of this opportunity, some of them will not be able to afford it. Their financial situation does not enable them to freeze their eggs, which may eventually lead to them experiencing significant fertility challenges later in their lives.

So, should we encourage people to start working for such companies? Should everyone work for Google in order to take advantage of this considerable benefit? Should we encourage other companies to offer such a service?

It would appear that this is a golden opportunity; the women can freeze their eggs, the company will pay, problem solved!

Unfortunately, this is an oversimplification and in order to explain the complexity of this question we need to delve a little deeper.

As a woman gets older the quality and quantity of eggs that she produces decreases. We do not know exactly why this is the case and several possible explanations have been suggested. The decrease in quality may be due to genetic changes in the egg as a result of the natural and constant duplication of the genetic material in the egg's nucleus. This constant process may cause a reduction in the integrity of the genetic code. Another possible explanation is due to the aging mitochondria, the battery and energy of the cell. This may adversely affect the quality of the eggs.

Even though we do not know the exact reason and biological pathway, the reality is that the quality of eggs decreases. One outcome is that as a woman gets older she is less likely to get pregnant, and when she does get pregnant there is a greater chance that the fetus will carry a serious genetic abnormality. This is the cause of the increased incidence of miscarriage as a woman gets older.

This is often called the "biological clock"; a woman who is not married, or, for any other reason, incapable of having children at a younger age, will face a time that she will find it much more difficult to attain and maintain a healthy pregnancy. Eventually she will not be able to get pregnant at all.

More on this next week. ■