

Struggling to start a family? Wijnland Fertility can help

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Globally, fertility is on the decline, and South Africa is no exception. In fact, one in three South African couples will struggle to conceive naturally. There are numerous and often complex reasons for this, but one major contributor is simply that people, on the whole, are now waiting until they're older to start their families.



Wijnland Fertility, a [renowned fertility clinic](#) located in Stellenbosch which attracts patients from all over the globe, helps couples and single people alike beat those odds. Their average embryo transfer success rate is **62%** - which is 22% above the World Health Organization's [SARA](#) benchmark. Their frozen embryo transfer success rate is **65%**, which is 33% above the SARA benchmark.

We take a look at what they're doing differently from other clinics to achieve this, how fertility treatment works, and when it might be time to consider reaching out for help.

What is infertility?

As we know, the vast majority of couples will need to try at least a few times before they fall pregnant naturally. So when do we consider there to be a problem?

Generally, a couple is considered infertile if:

- They haven't been able to conceive after trying for more than 12 months, or,
- If the female partner is above the age of 35, when they haven't been able to conceive after trying for six months or more
- With every year that the woman is above the age of 35, there is 10% less chance for her to fall pregnant naturally.
- When she is over 40, there is a 70% chance of her eggs being abnormal.
- In 50% of cases it will be established that the infertility of the couple is male-caused.

In these cases, the couple may need assistance from a fertility clinic to start (or grow) their family.

How fertility treatment works



There are many reasons a couple may be battling to fall pregnant. Some of the more common include:

Male factor infertility:

- Poor sperm quality
- Low sperm count
- Obstructive Azoospermia (a blockage is preventing sperm from being released)
- Congenital disorders (a condition present from birth)

Female factor infertility:

- Age – unfortunately, women don't continue to produce new egg cells during their lifetime like men do with sperm. That means that the older she is, the fewer of her egg cells remain.
- Medical conditions such as endometriosis and PCOS (polycystic ovarian syndrome)
- Uterine abnormalities (fertilisation is taking place, but the embryo cannot implant in the uterus and grow)
- Fallopian tube damage or blockage

Depending on the suspected underlying cause, fertility clinics like Wijnland employ a diverse range of treatments and interventions to help people start their families.

Some of these include:

- **Drug-based therapy** – medications to balance hormone levels or induce ovulation
- **Fertility Preservation** – sperm, egg and embryo freezing to allow patients to pursue pregnancy later in life
- **Minimally invasive surgical procedures** such as laparoscopy to correct a minor congenital defect
- **Assisted Reproductive Therapies (ARTs)**, including:
 - **AI** – Artificial Insemination

- **IVF** – In Vitro Fertilisation
- Advanced ARTs like **ICSI** (Intra Cytoplasmic Sperm Injection) where a single sperm is actually injected into the egg cell

What's behind Wijnland Fertility's success rates?



Many clinics offer these services, so why does Wijnland Fertility enjoy [success rates](#) so far above the global average? Their advantage may lie in a combination of three factors:

1. A diverse group of highly trained experts from various backgrounds

Aside from some of South Africa's leading fertility experts, embryologists, IVF coordinators, reproductive clinicians, andrology specialists, gynaecologists, and obstetricians, Wijnland also employs dietitians, counsellors, sex therapists and psychology experts to address every aspect of the patient's well-being. [Meet the team here.](#)

2. Access to state-of-the-art facilities and technologies

Wijnland makes use of the latest and most advanced technologies for their various departments, including an andrology lab, ova and sperm bank, oncology and miscarriage clinic, and surgical facilities. One such technology is the revolutionary Embryoscope™, an incubator complete with a time-lapse camera which allows their embryologists to observe the cell division pattern of embryos.

3. Their patient-centric, holistic approach to fertility

Another major contributor to Wijnland's success in treating infertility is the unique **biopsychosocial model (BPS)** which they use for helping patients. Wijnland was founded by fertility specialist Dr Johannes van Waart and Lizanne van Waart (MA Psychology), so taking a whole-patient approach has been embedded from the very beginning. Van Waart's MA focused on the different psychological aspects of infertility in both genders before the commencement of each new phase of clinical intervention.

Stress and anxiety can have a major impact on fertility. Patients face a huge amount of uncertainty and self-doubt, and many complex emotions when dealing with their inability to start a family on their own. By ensuring adequate psychological support and a caring, comfortable atmosphere, Wijnland helps to reduce that stress – and improve the patient's chances of success at the same time.

Who should consider visiting a fertility clinic?



If you and your partner have been trying to get pregnant for more than six months, it might be time to consider getting help. This is especially true if you have a family history of infertility, or are above the age of 35. Also, if the female partner's Anti-Müllerian hormone (AMH) blood level is below 0.03 nanograms per milliliter, (abbreviated ng/mL) it is strongly indicated that she should come for treatment.

Wijnland also assists same-sex couples and LGBTQ patients, as well as single men and women seeking to become parents through sperm, egg, or embryo donors, as well as surrogates.

Asking for help is never easy, but for something as close to people's hearts as starting a family of your own, the best time to act is now. The sooner you take that first step, the sooner you could be watching your little one take theirs!

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