Motherhood After 40: Is Halle Berry Too Old for Pregnancy?

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Recently, Halle Berry, age 46, announced she and her fiance, Olivier Martinez, were expecting their second child. For older women it might be hard to conceive, but Berry is part of a continuing wave of celebrity parents and just regular folks who are opt to try for parenthood late in the game, reported The Grio. But births like these bring up a hot medical debate: How old is too old for pregnancy?

Berry's not alone. Mariah Carey, Nia Long, and Nicole Kidman were all in their late 40s when they gave birth earlier this year. Recent statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) show that birth rates for women, ages 40 to 44, are at an all-time high. But with new medical treatments for women of advanced maternal age, late pregnancies may be less dangerous than ever before.

But the reality is that as women get older, egg quality gradually declines and fertility becomes a major issue. According to doctors, the chances of a woman conceiving a child decreases to less than five percent once she reaches her late 40s. When older moms do get pregnant naturally, their children are at a higher risk of genetic abnormalities, such as, multiple births (twins, triplets, etc.), Down Syndrome, Tay Sachs and autism.

As a result of these conception issues, many older mothers today turn to assisted reproductive technique (ART). The treatment includes in-vitro fertilization, artificial insemination and ovulation therapy in lieu of natural contraception, increasing women's likelihood for a healthy and full term pregnancy. Amazingly, under ART, successful births have been reported in women as old as age 70.

In addition, there's an upside for being an older mom. Research shows that older women in this age group are more comfortable financially, more emotionally stable and better committed to handle the rigors of parenting than younger mothers.

For women 40 and older who want to have kids, doctors suggest these women prepare themselves for pregnancy. This means older moms-to-be should eat properly and get their bodies in tip-top shape long before they conceive to decrease their risk of heart disease and other health problems later in life.

Click here to read more about staying healthy during pregnancy.

To read The Grio article, click here.

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