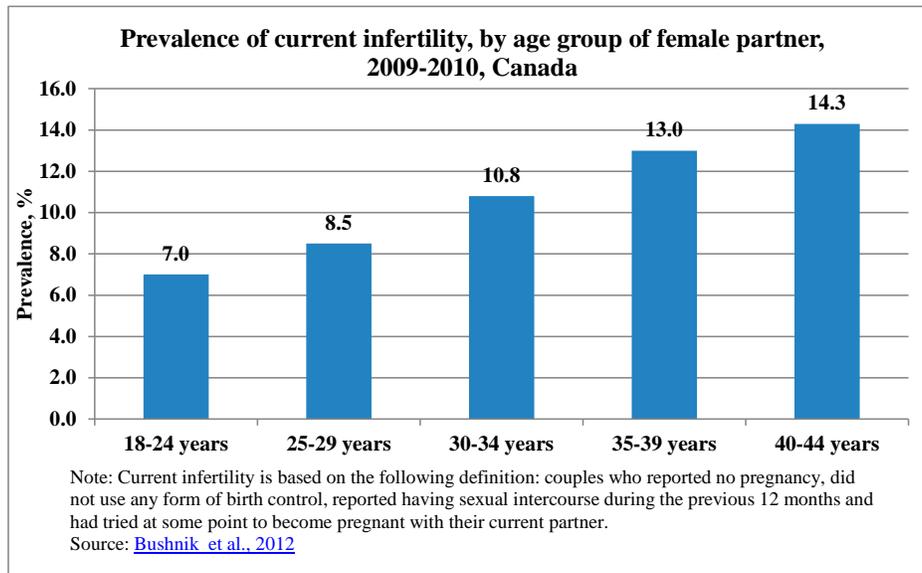


# FASCINATING Families

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## Trying to Conceive: Infertility in Canada



The overwhelming majority of Canadians aspire to become parents in their lifetime. . . When asked, 9 out of 10 Canadian adults say that having children in their life is important or very important (Vanier Institute, 2004). For some, the pathway to parenthood is complicated by infertility.

In Canada, the prevalence of current infertility ranges between 11.5% and 15.7%. Current infertility is defined as not achieving a pregnancy while being exposed to the possibility of conception - that is, without the use of contraception - over a 12 month period (Bushnik et al, 2012).

Infertility rates have increased notably over the last two decades. In 1984, the Canadian Fertility Survey estimated the prevalence of infertility among Canadian women aged 18-44 to be 5.4%. In 1992, similar studies reported an infertility rate of 8.5% among women in the same age group (Bushnik et al, 2012).

When it comes to infertility, age matters. Results from the 2009-2010 Canadian Community Health Survey show that the prevalence of infertility increases steadily with a women's age. Though the number of births among women aged 40-44 years has continued to grow - increasing from 8.4 to 9.2 births per 1,000 women between 2008 and 2009 (Statistics Canada,

2009) - this age group is also more likely to experience current infertility (see graph above).

Research shows that infertility is associated with marital status (married couples are more likely to experience infertility than their common-law peers), with parity (the number of children a couple already have), and with lifestyle factors such as Body Mass Index and smoking (Bushnik et al., 2012).

### Family Lens

Having children is a life-changing and joyous occasion for most men, women and families in Canada. For couples who are eager to start a family, facing the challenges associated with infertility can be financially, physically, and emotionally draining. With women, on average, waiting longer to have children, more couples are confronting the realities of infertility. For some, the strain these challenges can place on their relationship is formidable. For others, fulfilling their dreams of having children and raising a family means exploring assisted reproductive technologies, such as in vitro-fertilization and artificial insemination. The results are increasingly positive: the overall live birth rate among women who received fertility treatment at one of Canada's 28 IVF centres in 2009 was 30% per cycle started. Of these births, 71% were singletons, 28% were twins, and 1% were triplets or more (<http://bit.ly/oiMVwA>).