

BRINGING HOME

Baby

Fertility treatment made it a reality

Three miscarriages in one year? Kat Zangaro knew something was wrong. The Lyndhurst resident and her husband,

Brandon, were more than ready to become parents — and more than willing to investigate why it wasn't happening.

"I tracked my ovulation cycle. I checked my temperature every morning at 5 a.m. I was doing everything I could," says Kat. "I was frustrated that my body wasn't doing what a woman's body is supposed to do."

A doctor referred her to Rebecca Flyckt, MD, a Cleveland Clinic fertility specialist at the Beachwood Family Health and Surgery Center.

"Dr. Flyckt was a breath of fresh air," says Kat. "The first time we met her, I broke down and cried. She said, 'Let's look at your test results. Give me a month to figure this out.'"

OPTIMIZING THYROID

"Kat's problem wasn't getting pregnant, it was staying pregnant," says Dr. Flyckt. "There are lots of reasons for recurring miscarriages. Thyroid function was on my list of things to check."

Kat's thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) levels were within the normal range but were higher than ideal for conception and pregnancy.

"When you're pregnant, your best TSH level is well below 'normal' lab cutoffs," explains Dr. Flyckt, who eventually diagnosed Kat with an underactive thyroid.

She prescribed a medication to supplement thyroid function. Within

two weeks, Kat was pregnant again — this time with Hazel Rose, who was born in September 2014.

MORE THAN IN VITRO

"You think about going to a fertility specialist, and you automatically start thinking about the cost," says Mrs. Zangaro. "Little did we know, all we needed was a quick and easy fix."

Fertility treatment doesn't have to mean in vitro fertilization, which can be expensive and time-consuming, stresses Dr. Flyckt.

"Often, just a small adjustment can improve fertility," she says.



Rebecca Flyckt, MD
Fertility Specialist



The Fertility Center at Cleveland Clinic Beachwood provides a range of treatments, from simple to substantial:

Fertility medication. Fertility drugs can help women who don't ovulate on their own. Combined with timed intercourse or insemination, it's often all women need to conceive, says Dr. Flyckt.

Treatment for hormone issues. Both high and low thyroid function can cause difficulty ovulating, irregular menstruation, infertility and



Brandon and Kat Zangaro welcomed their daughter, Hazel Rose, after a fertility specialist pinpointed their issue.

pregnancy loss. Disturbances in prolactin, testosterone and other hormones also can cause infertility. Hormone-regulating medication can help.

Insemination. During this outpatient procedure, experts select a concentrated sample of healthy, active sperm and insert it into the woman's cervix or uterus.

Surgery. Surgery can correct the three primary gynecologic disorders that hinder fertility in women:

1. Damaged or blocked fallopian tubes, which prevent eggs from getting to the uterus

2. Fibroids (benign tumors in the uterus)

3. Endometriosis, which can cause pelvic pain, bleeding and infertility

In vitro fertilization. In vitro fertilization has the highest pregnancy success rate. Eggs are fertilized in a lab. When an embryo begins to grow, it is implanted in the woman's womb. Cleveland Clinic's in vitro program is one of the largest in Ohio, equipped with the most advanced technologies available.

As for Kat Zangaro, "I'll be on thyroid medication at least until we're done having children. We're still in contact with Dr. Flyckt, so we'll see her again for our next pregnancy."

CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR FERTILITY?

If you are concerned about getting or staying pregnant, try to conceive for a full year before seeking fertility treatment, advises Dr. Flyckt. However, if you are 35 or older, see a fertility specialist after six months. If you are older than 40 or you have painful periods, irregular periods or other gynecological issues, see a fertility specialist right away.

"Even if you've had multiple losses, stay encouraged," says Dr. Flyckt. "There are treatment options available that are easy, gentle and not too expensive that can improve your chances of a successful pregnancy."

GET HELP



For more information, visit clevelandclinic.org/fertility. To schedule an appointment with Dr. Flyckt or another fertility specialist at Cleveland Clinic Beachwood, call 216.839.3150.