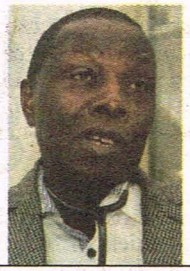

AskDoctor
Dr Karuhanga

SEND YOUR QUESTIONS TO
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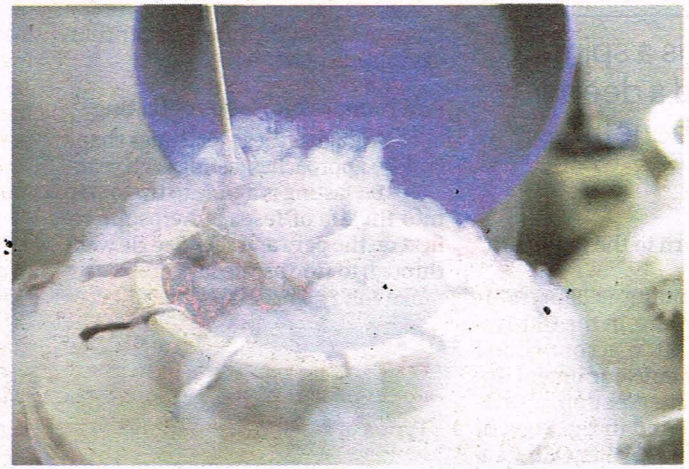
No partner, but want children: What are my fertility options?

I am 37 years old and currently do not have a partner, but I would like to have children in the future. My parents keep encouraging me to get pregnant, but I wonder, with whom? I am also worried because I hear that once a woman reaches menopause, she cannot get pregnant. I fear having children now without a father in their lives, yet I am also concerned that if I wait too long, I might lose my chance. What would you advise me? Alice



Dear Alice,

Thank you for asking this important and very personal question. Many women today find themselves in a similar situation: wanting children in the future but not feeling ready to have them now, especially without a suitable partner.

Menopause is defined as the permanent cessation of menstruation. A woman is considered to have reached menopause when she has gone 12 consecutive months without a menstrual period, without any other medical cause. In Uganda, the average age of menopause is about 47 years, although some women may experience it earlier or later.

Menopause occurs because the ovaries stop releasing eggs. Without the release of eggs (ovulation), natural pregnancy is no longer possible. However, pregnancy may still be achieved through assisted reproductive technologies such as In Vitro Fertilization (IVF). IVF involves retrieving eggs from the ovaries, fertilizing them with sperm in a laboratory, and then transferring the resulting embryo into the uterus.

Since you are 37 and wish to preserve your ability to have children later, preferably with a known partner, egg freezing is an option. This allows you to store your eggs now and use them in the future when you have a partner. Consulting a fertility specialist soon is recommended to assess your ovarian reserve and plan the best approach. You still have options, and planning ahead now increases your chances of a successful pregnancy when the time is right.