

Activist Launches Campaign to Encourage Women to Freeze their Eggs

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After an open letter to her younger self was read by thousands of women worldwide, a journalist with severe endometriosis, suffered a termination for medical reasons at 20 weeks, during the height of covid restrictions, has launched a campaign urging women to freeze their eggs.

It's a subject which is now in vogue - literally!

The current issue of UK Vogue references a detailed article on egg freezing, and several female celebrities have talked about putting their eggs on ice for the future. Actress Emma

Roberts has frozen her eggs because of her endometriosis diagnosis, and Paris Hilton, Chrissy Teigan, Kim Kardashian and Amy Schumer have all been open about undergoing the procedure.



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Emma Kemsley

“It seems the best way to help women with endometriosis, as it gives sufferers a better chance to have children long term” says Emma, who is urging medical professionals to give out this advice.

“The condition often affects women’s chances of having a baby because the longer they leave it the more the quality of their eggs can deteriorate”.

Many women are now choosing egg freezing because they

are using IVF to get pregnant in their late 30's and early 40's, however this can be far too late for some women with endometriosis - a debilitating condition that affects around 1 in 10 women.

Cells similar to the ones lining the womb grow elsewhere in the body, usually within the pelvic cavity. Then each month these cells react to the menstrual cycle by building up and breaking down causing bleeding. This leads to inflammation and pain and the formation of scar tissue.

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Endometriosis is also under the spotlight as a new storyline for character Ruby Allen in UK soap opera Eastenders. It's revealed the condition to a new generation of women who knew very little about it, and is now a topic for national discussion during endometriosis awareness month in March.

The character is played by actress Louisa Lytton, who receives the devastating news that she may have endometriosis, and fears for her fertility.

It's a situation which inspired journalist, Emma Kemsley to write her powerful story entitled: "The Storm Ahead - a Letter to my 19 Year Old Self" on the website Best Fertility Now.

The letter contains a shocking level of detail about the challenges her younger self would experience with endo; including being shamed by a sexist boss, vomiting and blacking out from the pain at work, and having only one of her ovaries functioning due to endometriosis adhesions.

The letter struck a chord with "Endo Warriors" around the world, and she has been overwhelmed with comments and messages about the impact of her advice to women to advocate for themselves in medical situations, and for sufferers to freeze their eggs.



While endometriosis and egg-freezing are becoming more visible, attitudes are slow to change. Many critics of the way that endometriosis and fertility in general are handled by the medical profession, claim that sexism is at the root of many of the issues.

Emma says: "Because the symptoms of endo tend to coincide with your cycle, it gets written off as a bad period. Many women have been accused of exaggerating their pain, and even imagining their illness. You can't deal with the poor way that endo has been handled for many years, without dealing with the sexism that's at the heart of it. I feel like we're ready to have this conversation now, which is amazing."

A UK GP hit BBC headlines recently, criticised for telling a woman in her early 20's to get pregnant to ease her endometriosis symptoms. Emma says:

"This is not acceptable. Nobody should feel like they need to have a baby to ease the symptoms of an illness that should be treated with surgery.

No woman should regret not freezing her eggs for the future, because she simply didn't know that was an option, or because she's waited so long for treatment. When I wrote the letter I wasn't advising women to freeze their eggs, I was just talking about how I wish that I had done it as soon as I got my diagnosis. But I got women messaging me and leaving comments saying that they had been inspired to freeze their eggs, and I decided to start campaigning for awareness of this option."

Emma Kemsley
Best Fertility Now
+447979556558 ext.

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