

Springing Forward

Spring is in the air—and in our every step! There’s been much positive change at USC Fertility since we published the last edition of USC Fertility Success News, and we’re happy to share it with you.

First of all, our family grew last November when we welcomed embryologist Anya Hein to the USCF fold. She came to us from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo with a degree in Animal Science with an Emphasis in Reproduction. Anya has had the unique experience of completing an undergraduate course in Applied Embryology, where she gained training in many of the necessary IVF laboratory skills. In quick order, she has become a great asset to our lab. So here’s a belated public welcome to Anya!

Perhaps the biggest bit of news is that we launched our new blog in January. If you haven’t yet visited that part of our website, please do. There you’ll find weekly posts by the three of us as well as the rest of the USCF staff. From our embryologist Mary, to nurse Agnes, to practice manager Heidi, to our insights as doctors, every member of our team now has a voice to communicate directly with you. The blog is where you’ll find the most up-to-date information on where we’ve been, what we’ve been up to, and where we’re going.

In mid-March, Dr. Bendikson returned from maternity leave, having given birth to a beautiful baby girl. Ainsley Reagan Bendikson was born Friday, January 16, at 9:35 a.m. at St. John’s Hospital in Santa Monica, California. She weighed seven pounds, two ounces and measured eighteen inches.



Dr. Kristin A. Bendikson



Dr. Karine Chung

A week before her delivery, Dr. Bendikson joined Dr. Chung for the taping of the second season of Discovery Health’s “I Didn’t Know I Was Pregnant” special. The initial airing of the program, which also co-starred Kristin and Karine, aired in June 2008 and became the highest-rated Discovery Health show ever. The two latest episodes aired on March 17 and 24, and are just a taste of the ten-part series of “IDKIWP” specials slated to be televised in the late spring.

USC Fertility is also pleased to announce a new collaboration with Women & Cancer Magazine, which is published quarterly in print and online at www.CancerConsultants.com. Watch for an article about fertility preservation for cancer patients written by Dr. Chung in the June 2009 issue. USC Fertility will also contribute to

the publisher’s recurring “Cancer Tips” column on an ongoing basis. These shorter pieces will be distributed across more than 130 cancer-related websites managed by Cancer Consultants, Inc.

Last but not least, we’ve also finally completed the remodeling of our offices, so if you haven’t seen the “new and improved” USC Fertility space, please don’t hesitate to drop by.

Until we meet again in print, please know that we’re here for you, as we’ve always been. No matter how busy we may be, no matter how fast things may change within our walls and around us, we’re always just a phone call away.

Warm Regards,
 Richard J. Paulson, MD
 Karine Chung, MD
 Kristin A. Bendikson, MD



Dr. Richard Paulson

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Octuplets

The world of infertility treatment generally stays fairly quiet. There is the occasional movie star having twins, and there is speculation as to whether or not fertility treatment was involved, but in general, it's not front page news.

Until the octuplets happened.

First, it looked like another "miracle birth" story. Indeed, the doctors who managed the pregnancy and delivery performed a miracle. But then the questions started: how had the pregnancy happened? What kind of treatment was involved? Who was the doctor that treated her? And was this a good idea?

And for the first time, the media took note of the fact that in the world of infertility treatment, high order multiple gestations are not a good outcome. There is great danger that all of the babies may be lost. In some cases, the pregnancy is delivered very close to the age of viability, and some of the babies are lost, while others suffer long-term disability. The relatively good outcome for the Suleman octuplets was the result of a combination of good obstetrical care and the fact that she had previously carried 5 pregnancies, including a set of twins.

We were flattered and pleased that the media selected our practice to provide so much of the background information. It is not easy to deal with reporters' questions, when answers can be misunderstood, quotes taken out of context, and information turned into misinformation. But we did our best, and did manage to talk to quite a few media outlets, including the Associated Press, Los Angeles Times, and then in quick succession virtually every local TV station. We had interviews on network shows, such as the "CBS Evening News with Katie Couric" and "The Today Show." Even People Magazine and the online edition of Time came calling.

The culmination of this media frenzy (for me) came when I was invited to take part in a group discussion surrounding the octuplets on "The Dr. Phil Show." We ended up doing two shows on two successive days, and I must admit that Dr. Phil was very smart, and very quick. Overall, the media did a very good job of demonstrating the very odd situation that the mother put herself into.



Dr. Richard Paulson

For those of us in the field, we too experience the kind of mixed feelings associated with the birth. There is the happiness that the babies are going to make it. There is the very real satisfaction in knowing that fertility treatment has come so far that it is possible to get 8 embryos to implant and grow. The field has come a very long way since 1986, when I first started and when pregnancies were very few and triplets were rare. And there is the resentment at the irresponsibility of the doctor and patient who set up this very dangerous situation and whose actions have the politicians calling for regulation of fertility clinics. That is a very real danger, and if reproductive choices are restricted, access to care could be compromised, and our ability to help couples and individuals with unusual stories could be dramatically curtailed.

But for now, the calls for regulation have abated, and it looks like the octuplet story will have a happy ending, with at least a reasonably good outcome for the octuplets, and generally good news for all the infertile patients seeking care: the outcomes are good and getting better, and responsible, individualized care is still available.

Dr. Richard Paulson

EVENTS

February 7, 2009

Dr. Chung presented on Fertility Preservation at the Event for Children's Cause for Cancer Advocacy, Los Angeles, California.

February 21, 2009

Dr. Chung spoke at Arizona ACOG Section and Phoenix Ob/Gyn Society Midwinter Symposium, Phoenix, Arizona.

March 18, 2009

Dr. Chung presented at the Ventura County Medical Center, Ventura, California, regarding updates on assisted reproductive technologies.

March 18-20, 2009

Dr. Paulson, a member of the board of directors of the American Society of Reproductive Medicine, attended the Society of Gynecologic Investigation in Glasgow, Scotland, which aims to establish an international research society in women's reproductive health.

March 26-28, 2009

Dr. Paulson attended the Board Meeting of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, of which he is a member.

April 1, 2009

Dr. Chung presented on "Cancer and Fertility: Understanding Options for Patients and Survivors of Childhood Cancer," at Grand Rounds, Children's Hospital of Los Angeles.

April 22-26, 2009

Dr. Bendikson led the round table sessions at this year's Pacific Coast Reproductive Society meeting. Mary Francis was the co-program chair, and Dr. Paulson and Dr. Chung participated as attendees. The PCRS is a voluntary, nonprofit organization deeply rooted in the continuing education (CME) of professionals in Reproductive Medicine.

April 22, 2009

Dr. Chung presented on "Ovarian Stimulation: Review and New Strategies" at the Post-Graduate Course, Pacific Coast Reproductive Society Annual Meeting.

TBD

USC Fertility will sponsor, and send representatives to attend the Hope Uncorked, a Fertile Hope event that helps Fertile Hope achieve its mission to provide reproductive information, support and hope to cancer patients and survivors whose medical treatments present the risk of infertility.

In each issue of *USC Fertility Success News*, we will answer a patient's question related to a specific fertility-related topic. This issue's question pertains to timing of intercourse when trying to become pregnant, and is being answered by **Dr. Karine Chung**.

Q: Is there a best or better time of the month to have sex when trying to conceive?

Dr. Chung: Myths about the best timing and frequency of sex when trying to get pregnant can lead to unnecessary stress. Even when a couple is trying to conceive, they do not need to have sex every day, and there is no need to drop everything and rush into bed at the exact moment of ovulation.

Since sperm lives about two to three days inside the female reproductive tract, for most couples, having sex two to three times a week is enough to result in pregnancy.

For couples who prefer not to have intercourse that often, the key is to have the sperm waiting for the egg. Women with 28- to 30-day menstrual

cycles typically ovulate around the twelfth or fourteenth day of the cycle. Upon ovulation, the egg is released from the surface of the ovary and is then captured by one of the fallopian tubes. The egg has a 24-hour lifespan during which it can be fertilized by sperm.

Research studies have shown that sex on the days just before ovulation most often leads to pregnancy. Highest pregnancy rates were seen if sex occurred on the day before ovulation (the day of the LH surge detected by over the counter ovulation predictor kits). Sex as early as six days before ovulation also had a chance of pregnancy, but it was much smaller. If the only time sex occurred was after ovulation, there were no pregnancies.

This is how we know that the sperm should be waiting for the egg!

If you would like to submit a question for an upcoming issue of *USC Fertility Success News*, please send an email to **doctors@USCFertility.org**.



Dr. Karine Chung

BIRTHS!

Check out a few of the many recent additions to the USC Fertility Family:



1



2



3



4



5

Ainsley Reagan Bendikson [1]

Born to USC Fertility's own Dr. Kirstin Bendikson

Cali Elizabeth [2]

The newest addition to the extended USC Fertility family!

Blake Thomas Wyckoff [3]

Born to Dale and Joyce Wyckoff, little brother to Austin

Isaac and Ariel [4]

Double the Cuteness! Born June 2008

Gabriella Otto [5]

Swinging into Spring: Another USC Fertility baby

If you would like your newest arrival to be pictured in an upcoming issue of *USC Fertility Success News*, please send an email to **Reception@USCFertility.org**.

ONLINE

USC Fertility Blog Launches!

To keep our patients up to date on the latest fertility news as well as the comings and goings of our clinic, the doctors, staff, and nurses of USC Fertility, we launched a new blog on **USCFertility.org** this past January.

Updated three times a week, the USC Fertility blog is both an excellent resource for fertility information and expert opinions, as well as an in-depth, behind-the-scenes look at USC Fertility.

We invite you to visit our blog every week on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at USCFertility.org/blog. There you will find new posts penned by Drs. Paulson, Chung and Bendikson, as well as Heidi, our nurses, staff members and yes, even our patients. You can also subscribe to our RSS feed, which will allow you

to receive our entries in your RSS reader as soon as they are posted.

This past month we have discussed a wide range of topics including Dr. Paulson's recent media appearances, a day in the life of an IVF Nurse Coordinator, the efficacy of the Fertility Diet, Proposition 8, surrogacy, and the octuplet media storm.

Whether it's an opinion piece on a recent scientific advancement or change in government legislation, an update on the ongoing office construction, a personal account of "a day in the life of a USC Fertility employee," a patient's poem or birth story, or the latest and cutest baby photos, we are confident that you will find something exciting, educational, and enlightening to read at the USC Fertility Blog.



IN THE NEWS

National and international media regularly turn to USC Fertility physicians for expert information and commentary on reproductive health issues. And throughout the year, we makes news of our own! A complete list of press releases, interviews, and media coverage is available in our Web site "Press Room" at USCFertility.org. Highlights include:

3/12/2009: Discovery Health

Dr. Chung and Dr. Bendikson co-starred as the physician experts on the first two of ten "I Didn't Know I Was Pregnant" specials, which aired on Discovery Health March 17 and 24.

2/11-12/2009: Dr. Phil

Dr. Paulson served as the fertility expert on Dr. Phil's two consecutive shows devoted to "The Octuplet Debate."

2/11/2009: CBS News with Katie Couric

Dr. Chung appeared on the "CBS Evening News with Katie Couric" to discuss the octuplets, and the lack of regulations and guidelines for fertility treatments.

1/27/2009: The Associated Press, The Los Angeles Times, KABC, Fox and more!

Following the birth of octuplets in Southern California, Dr. Paulson was called upon to comment for such media outlets as ABC's "World News with Charlie Gibson," KABC 7 and KTTV Fox 11 in Los Angeles, the Associated Press, The Los Angeles Times, and 89.3 FM KPCC Southern California Public Radio's "Airtalk with Larry Mantle."

1/13/2009: USCF Docs Wrap Production on Discovery Health Special

Dr. Bendikson and Dr. Chung participated in two episodes of the Discovery Health series "I Didn't Know I Was Pregnant", in which Bendikson and Chung weighed in on 11 separate medical cases. The inaugural episode, which aired in June 2008, has been the highest-rated Discovery Health show to date. Two more specials are scheduled to air before June. Visit USC Fertility's blog for Kristin's and Karine's thoughts.

1/7/2009: ABCNews.com

Dr. Paulson was interviewed for a story about reproductive organ anomalies titled "Woman Discovers She Has Two Wombs."

INSPIRATION



Picnic in the Park by Michael Lyon

Out of darkness shines a light
with a hope that won't say die.
From our best first fast hello
to a day there'll be a picnic in the park.

You may fall but don't stay down.
Oh, the places we will go
through this great big rush of life.
Won't you take your time and smell the roses?

Such a yearning in our hearts
of a sunrise on the way.
We will see you in our dreams,
dreaming of the day we'll have
a picnic in the park.

USC Fertility
Alternatives for
Today & Tomorrow