

Fertile Ground

Among would-be parents who need a little help conceiving, Chicagoans are better situated than most: Illinois is one of 14 states that require insurance companies to cover fertility treatments (although several loopholes exist, including for companies with >>>>



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fewer than 25 employees or with religious objections, such as Loyola University).

This is good news for local parents, since in Chicago, the average fertility treatment can range from \$500 for pills to \$12,000 for in vitro fertilization. That is about 10 to 20 percent more than for comparable treatments on the West or East Coast,

where an abundance of HMOs drives the cost down, says **Dr. Joel Brasch, medical director of Advanced Reproductive Health Centers/Chicago IVF**. Annually, aspiring parents in the greater Chicago area (which includes metro Chicago, northern Illinois, southern Wisconsin, northwest Indiana, and southern Michigan) spend \$100 million on fertility treatments, out of \$2 billion spent nationally, according to **Brasch**.

Of course, potential parents could consider some less expensive alternatives first, such as over-the-counter ovulation tests; these cost about \$50 for a pack of two. Acupuncture is another option. Larisa Turin, a licensed practitioner who owns ChicagoAcupuncture in the Gold Coast and in Northbrook, claims to have a 65 to 75 percent success rate. Turin says in her experience a two-month regimen, for which she charges about \$1,700, is the average time it takes for conception.

Average Cost of Fertility Treatments in Chicago (per ovulation cycle)

Fertility Pills	\$500 to \$1,000 (\$50 per five-pill dose. Costs increase with testing and monitoring)
Fertility Shots	\$1,200 to \$5,000 (\$150 to \$500 per shot, usually one a day for eight to ten days)
In Vitro Fertilization	\$10,000 to \$12,000 (Average number of tries it takes to conceive: 1.7)