



"AD ASTRA PER ASPERA" "TO THE STARS THROUGH DIFFICULTIES" | SPRING 2008

ASTRA FERTILITY NEWS

ACCREDITATION MATTERS! ASTRA TEAM IS PREPARING FOR 2009 CCHSA ACCREDITATION

The aim for continuous quality improvement is the pivotal motivation for participating in accreditation. Organizations that seek accreditation understand that there is always room for growth. At Astra, we seek to improve the standards and services and are committed to raising the bar to strive for higher quality service. Although few fertility clinics in Canada are accredited by this reputable organization, Astra has been fully accredited by the CCHSA (the same organization that accredits hospitals in Canada) since October 2006. We are currently preparing for our upcoming accreditation survey in October 2009. At Astra, we are undeniably committed to offering quality service and are striving for continual improvement.

Patients should refer to the CCHSA website (Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation) to know which organizations that offer fertility services are truly accredited and committed to providing quality care to their patients.

To look for fertility clinics accredited by the CCHSA, you can visit www.cchsa.ca, look under public info, accredited organizations.

ASTRA: KEEPING PACE WITH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE PATIENT CARE

Astra has invested in IT over the past 16 months in order to improve communication among staff, patients and their referring physicians. We have utilized a superb and international fertility database management system to enable us to achieve our goal. We are currently collecting e-mails from all of our patients and referring physicians to update our database as we adapt and shift to electronic files. The end results will optimally be the timely delivery of services and more efficient communication between physicians involved in patient care. Using an electronic file system also reduces risk of errors and secures every step in patient care.

If you have changed your e-mail or would like to update us with your e-mail, please send the new information to info@astrafertility.com.



ABOUT THE DOCTOR

Dr. Essam Michael is the Clinical Director of Astra Fertility Group. He is certified by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada as well as the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology. After completing his residency at Queen's University in 1994, Dr. Michael joined ISIS Regional Fertility Centre in Mississauga in 1999 as a founding partner and staff consultant. Dr. Michael has also been an active staff member in the department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at William Osler Health Centre, Etobicoke Campus, for the past 12 years.

Dr. Michael manages and treats a wide range of medical and surgical fertility problems. He is highly skilled in endoscopic procedures and is experienced in a full range of Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) treatments. His area of interest is focused on uterine and pelvic factors related to infertility, such as tubal disease and endometriosis. He is actively involved in clinical research and has several publications in the field of reproductive medicine.

Astra Fertility's mission is to offer effective, compassionate, and affordable state-of-the-art fertility treatments and make them easily accessible to all patients in various communities. They pride themselves on patient satisfaction. Instead of randomly trying different fertility recipes available in all clinics, they strive to first reach an accurate diagnosis for the fertility problem before administering the most effective treatment option. This significantly cuts down on the emotional and financial strain that many endure before reaching their goal. Without an accurate diagnosis, treatment remains experimental.

Astra Fertility also offers a wide range of skilled surgical treatments. If indicated, surgical options can help you achieve your goal in a shorter period of time and likely without the need to use fertility drugs or expensive Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART) procedures. Rest assured that quality care is standardized in all Astra Fertility clinics regardless of location.



November 2007

To The Wonderful Staff at Astra Fertility Group,

We wanted to write you all a quick note to express our gratitude to let you know how wonderful we think you are. We figure, why wait until we have a healthy baby to write a "job well done" note.

Although we have not been graced with a little one just yet, we think you all should "keep up the great work". Attending appointments so often can seem tedious and pointless at times, but you all make every 6:30 a.m. visit more bearable and promising. Your smiles that greet us as we walk through the door provide a warm and welcoming feeling. Your caring and genuine concern is very much appreciated. You provide hope and support in more ways than you will ever know. You are all so patient and understanding, that we feel fortunate to be patients at Astra Fertility Group. Even when we feel like giving up and throwing in the towel, you always say the right things and make the process a little more promising.

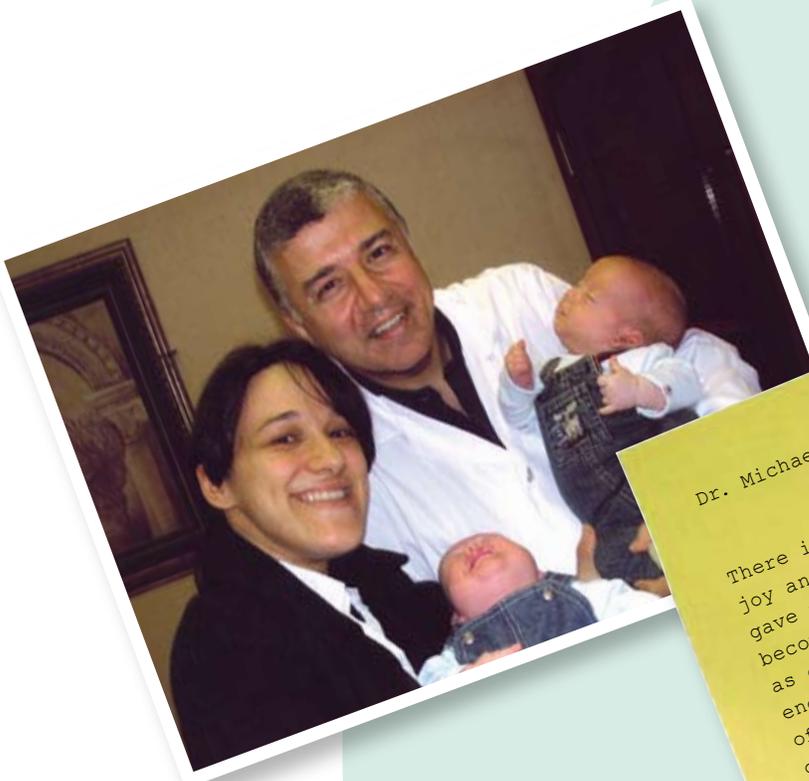
We want to thank you for the personal, one-on-one attention that you provide us. At the drop of a hat, you access our file and answer our silly questions and assure us that there is no silly question (even though we may have asked it 3 times). We bother you many times, but you always take the time to acknowledge our concerns and address them and ensure that we always understand. You offer counseling and comforting thoughts when we need them the most.

Thank you for your continuous positive thoughts, energy and support.

Regards,

Becky Dulay and Aman Banga

TESTIMONIALS



Dr. Michael and Astra Fertility Team

There is no words that can describe the joy and happiness of the gift that you gave us. After 10 long years of trying to become parents, we walked into this office as our only hope. We will never forget encouragement from Dr. Michael and effort of his team and today, we have new meaning became proud parents of two healthy little angels, Daniel and Mark. It is not possible to describe how much we are thankful and how much we appreciate your work. Once again, thank you for giving us the gift of life.

Daniel, Mark, Sanja and Sinisa

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PATIENT SAFETY: A PRIMARY FOCUS DURING A PATIENT'S TREATMENT AT ASTRA

While treatment for fertility is directed toward achieving pregnancy in a short period of time, minimizing your risk is our primary goal. Missing a proper dose of medication or taking more than you should, can undoubtedly affect the outcome of your treatment. The most common causes of risk are poor communication between the physician and the patient and the inability to follow detailed instructions. When you visit the nurse at the start of your treatment, you will be given clear instructions on how to self-inject, when to come back for re-evaluation and how to accommodate to dose changes.

It is imperative that we have your current e-mail address and your current primary phone line. If you are not fluent in English, make sure you have a friend or a family member who can assist you in your communication with our clinic.

At Astra, we have appointed a safety officer who regularly checks the facility, including the entrances to the clinics. We like to ensure that a safe, comfortable and pleasant environment is provided. Any potentially hazardous situation is corrected immediately. Your feedback as a client regarding Astra's environment is greatly appreciated.

Highest standards are employed in the lab to ensure the accurate and safe handling of specimens.

MALE AGE AND INFERTILITY: IS THERE A CORRELATION?

It is clear that female age has a large impact on fertility since females do not produce any new eggs after their birth. Women only consume eggs from their stock until their reserve is exhausted. The ovarian reserve is continuously declining in quantity and quality as women age. Until recently, it has become clear that men's age also has a negative impact on male fertility. Sperm quality also declines with age and this may not be detectable through a routine semen analysis. Age effect on sperm is at the sperm DNA level. A man in his fifties has an average 30% less chance to achieve pregnancy with a fertile partner than a man in his twenties. Sperm counts and motility begin to decline after the age of 25-26. But most importantly, the negative effect that age has on sperm DNA fragmentation strongly correlates with sperm fertility potential.

Studies have shown increased DNA fragmentation in sperm as men ages. Sperm DNA fragmentation of more than 30% indicates a significant negative effect on pregnancy outcome using IUI or traditional IVF. IVF with ICSI (Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection) should be the treatment of choice in these cases to avoid wasted and resources in selecting a more cost effective treatment.

Sperm DNA fragmentation testing should be offered to all couples with unexplained infertility, men over the age of 40, and men with exposure to toxic agents or with questionable large varicocele.

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ASTRA FERTILITY CLINIC

