

## JOB PERKS--AN EGGS-TREMELY NOVEL IDEA

The Yiddish word for “pregnant” is “shvanger.”  
To “freeze” is “farfoyrn vern.”

By



MARJORIE GOTTLIEB WOLFE

For companies who have cash to burn, who are trying to attract AND retain “yung talant” (young talent), what would be considered a perk?

- a) 401K matching funds
- b) FREE (“umzist”) medical/dental benefits
- c) Game rooms, some with a “climbing wall”
- d) FREE food; Pizza Fridays; Jimmy Buffet Day, etc.
- e) Gym membership/gym subsidies
- f) 4-day workweek
- g) Paid maternity/paternity/adoption leave
- h) Freebies like “zhurnal” (magazine) subscriptions, tickets to sporting events and movies, pet setting, etc.
- i) Yoga classes
- j) BIG “veykh” (soft) couches arranged in a lounge/bar atmosphere

Now let’s add a new perk: egg freezing! Yes, Facebook and Apple are offering to pay for female employees “farfoyrn vern” (to freeze) their eggs. In this way, they can spend prime baby-making “yern” (years) in the workplace.

A woman is born with roughly a million immature eggs in her ovaries. A woman in her teens has about 400,000 immature eggs. That dwindles to 25,000 by age 37, and about 1,000 by age 51.

What does it cost to freeze one’s eggs? For approximately \$10,000,

to \$15,000, plus storage fees and costly medications, women can store their egg cells until they're ready to get pregnant. Facebook and Apple are willing to cover up to \$20,000 of expenses.

Egg freezing, like IVF, does involve a tremendous investment in time, money, discomfort or "veytik" (pain), and health risks. The woman must undergo two weeks of hormone treatment, with from 1 - 3 injections a day. She must visit the clinic every one to three days to monitor egg growth. Egg retrieval is done under light general anesthesia, using a "nodl" (needle) through the vaginal wall, to reach the ovaries and remove the eggs one by one.

Doctors in the U. S. who are familiar with "halacha" (or Jewish religious law) say they are seeing more Orthodox patients who have been sent by their rabbis to freeze their eggs before their fertility wanes.

The biggest "mitzvah" (commandment) is to bear children. Reproductive technology has perfected freezing techniques so that pregnancy rates are about the same as using "frish" (fresh) eggs when in vitro fertilization (IVF) methods are used.

According with "halacha," eggs must be placed in NEW ("nay") Petri dishes, even if they have been sterilized. Jewish law is "permissive" on destruction of unused eggs or embryos.

Dr. Sherman Silber, director of the Infertility Center of St. Louis, has a practice which caters to Orthodox Jews. About 5 percent of Silber's patients are Orthodox. They follow Orthodox "halacha." "Der patsyent" (The patient) can get her shots on Friday night BEFORE Shabbos, and she can get her shots on Saturday night, AFTER Shabbos.

BTW, in Israel the procedure is covered by the government. Previously, freezing eggs was only offered to women who are undergoing infertility treatment or who are patients undergoing chemotherapy or other treatment that could damage their eggs.

In an evening broadcast on Israeli's Channel 2, the development was cheered by 30-something women, happy to have increased control over their reproductive lives. "The pressure to have children is unbelievable," said one woman, who noted that freezing her eggs is something she'd

consider if only to quiet her mother's incessant nagging that time is running out.

Some rabbis recommend every "neet khasene gehat" (single) woman over age 32 freeze her eggs as an "farzikherung" (insurance) policy against infertility.

Ynetnews.com reports that more Israeli women choose to freeze their eggs. New regulations allow women to freeze eggs without medical justification. And the demand for the procedure is growing.

In Shaare Zedek Medical Center in Jerusalem, 30 women have frozen their eggs, most of them religious. "Infertility aliya" is a new term. It means that American Jewish couples become citizens and settle in Israel primarily so that they can qualify for state-funded IVF. In the U. S. they simply cannot afford children.

Source: "A New Reason To Make 'Infertility Aliyah': Free Egg-Freezing" by Allison Kaplan Sommer, The Jewish Daily Forward, Oct. 13, 2010

Rabbi Kenneth Brander, dean of the Yeshiva University Center for the Jewish Future, says, "Please use fertility options in a responsible fashion, but it is not mandated to do so."

Source: The Jewish Standard, May 10, 2013,  
"Freezing your eggs" by Dr. Miryam Z. Wahrman

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MARJORIE WOLFE wonders if Facebook and Apple are using this innovative job perk as a ploy to make women sacrifice ("mevater zayn oyf") their childbearing years for the sake of climbing up the corporate "leyter" (ladder). In a 2013 study published in "der zhurnal" (the journal/periodical) of Fertility and Sterility, the majority of patients who froze their eggs said they felt "empowered."