



Support in singleness

An isolating start

Knowing you may be dealing with an infertility diagnosis before entering marriage can sometimes feel like an intimidating journey. For many, there can be health symptoms or specific medical diagnoses that may indicate potential issues with conceiving down the road, or perhaps may even indicate permanent infertility. Knowing these issues may be part of your story before you've even met your future spouse can bring emotional, spiritual and physical challenges. If this is you, know that you are not alone! With this resource, we hope to help you create your own "Support in singleness" plan for beginning to navigate this journey.

Creating your "Support in singleness" plan

★ Make your spiritual plan

Satan loves to attack us in our most vulnerable moments. Don't let him get the upper hand! And don't try to navigate this alone. Consider seeking out a spiritual director or mentor who you can regularly turn to for guidance, encouragement and support. Who amongst your friend group is a "faith-filled friend" you can turn to for prayer and encouragement in your infertility journey? If you don't currently have any individuals that can fill these, put it to prayer! God will not leave you hanging! Jot down a plan for your prayer time and ideas for spiritual nourishment as well ie: adoration, confession, scripture reading and spiritual reading.

★ Create your health and wellness plan

If you are dealing with potential infertility (eg: your periods are irregular or you've been given a diagnosis of PCOS), use this season of singleness to work towards a healthy you! Now is a great time to begin working with a doctor to start addressing any health issues you may be having. NaProTechnology doctors are great at working to investigate and treat underlying health issues that may affect your fertility. There's no need to wait until you're married! Addressing health issues may save you lots of time and frustration once you're married, and taking care of your reproductive health is one way you can honor the body God gave you. Our key tip, if you fall into this category, is to approach it as "becoming the healthiest version of me" as opposed to "making sure I can conceive once I'm married". No medical treatment is a guarantee, and regardless of whether or not you conceive, spending time getting your hormones at optimal levels etc will help your overall health in so many other ways. If you're interested in looking into NaPro, see our resource on "[Managing medical appointments and navigating NaPro](#)".

If you've been given a more definite infertility diagnosis (eg: you've had to undergo chemotherapy, or have had to have a hysterectomy), take some time to create a health and

wellness plan that will help you feel and be your best. This will serve you well now, and will bless your marriage later if you marry. This health and wellness plan could include any regular medical check-ups, working with a therapist, or regular physio or massage therapy - whatever helps you to feel your best physically and mentally! If you're dealing with unpleasant side effects of medications or treatments, plan small rewards for yourself or consider asking someone from your support network to keep you company. Spend some time brainstorming what activities and appointments will help you feel your best.

★ **Pull together your support network**

It's time to assemble your tribe! Select a group of family or close friends with whom you can share your thoughts and worries, who can offer verbal support and encouragement and perhaps a slice of cake after a tough appointment or triggering announcement, who can cheer you on and join you in some good self-care activities. Consider adding your counselor, doctor and/or spiritual director. Take time to identify and surround yourself with those you can turn to and who will support you. When using Fruitful Hollow Resources which mention including a spouse in planning your supports, pick one of these people from your support network to take on that role.

★ **Plan ahead for sharing news and needs**

Take some time to brainstorm and sketch out potentially difficult conversations you may want to have regarding your diagnosis. Consider who you would like to share with, where and when you'd like to have the conversation and what type of support you'd like to request from the listener. Think ahead to potential questions and concerns they may have and consider what you would like your response to be. Make sure to jot down your own feelings about your diagnosis and consider sharing those as well, if appropriate. Writing these things down is a good way to be proactive and give yourself a sense of control as opposed to worrying about how the conversation may play out. Would you prefer to share news in an email or over coffee? If you're hoping for validation over your sad or scared feelings, tell them that's what you need. If you don't want suggestions of what to do, tell them that you're not looking for advice at this time. If you need your loved one to help you plan fun things to look forward to or to help you dream of what your future could look like given the new information, ask for that.

★ **Pray about the next step God is calling you to**

Take advantage of this season for some serious prayer time. Ask God about the next step He is calling you to, whether it be taking the opportunity to do some medical exploration, or to discovering ways to be fruitful in your current single life, or ways to minister to others in your future married life, put it all to prayer. Listen to what He has to tell you, and don't be afraid to act. At the Fruitful Hollow we're all about being fruitful in the present season.

MY "SUPPORT IN SINGLENES" PLAN

Example

Spiritual plan

Spiritual director/faith mentor: *check to see if there are recommended spiritual directors in my diocese*

Faith-filled friend/family member: *Sarah. Try to visit or call every other month*

Daily prayer time: *morning, before work*

Scripture plan: *psalm a day*

Spiritual reading: *Litanies of the Heart by Gerry Ken Crete*

Other spiritual nourishment: *adoration once a week*

Health and wellness plan

Regular wellness appointments to keep up: *specialist follow-ups*

Meds/supplements: *select cozy audiobook to listen to when taking supplements, ask friend to accompany me to upcoming medical appt*

New wellness appointments to explore: *counseling, massage*

Exercise/movement: *daily walk, try weekly group exercise class*

My support network

Friends: *Samantha and Jessica*

Family members: *my cousin and my mom*

Others on my team: *my counselor and pastor*

Sharing news and needs

Conversation #1: *Sharing diagnosis with boyfriend - share at home, request validation and help planning things to look forward to.*

Conversation #2: *Sharing diagnosis with family - request validation, emotional support and help researching medications. Ask for company at appointments.*

My prayer

Love, help me along my little Way. Give me comfort when I deal with medical anxieties and challenges. Give me wisdom and insight for next steps. Provide me with the loving supports and community I need.

MY “SUPPORT IN SINGLENESS” PLAN

Your turn

Spiritual plan

Spiritual director/faith mentor:

Faith-filled friend/family member:

Daily prayer time:

Scripture plan:

Spiritual reading:

Other spiritual nourishment:

Health and wellness plan

Regular wellness appointments to keep up:

Meds/supplements:

New wellness appointments to explore:

Exercise/movement:

My support network

Friends:

Family members:

Others on my team:

Sharing news and needs

Conversation #1

Conversation #2

My prayer