

Tokophobia

For a women who have suffer trauma after childbirth, the idea of getting pregnant again is terrifying, frightening, out of the question, ridiculous, it is impossible even to consider it. Going through the whole ordeal again might make her feel sick with terror, even though deep down she wants to have another baby. But in spite of taking all the precautions some women find themselves pregnant again and for many abortion is not an option . These women are suffering from Tokophobia, which is the fear of getting pregnant again and could be primary or secondary Tokophobia.

Primary Tokophobia

Often sufferers will show poor perceptions and distortions of pregnancy and childbirth. Fear of childbirth may transmit over generations and this can produce a second generation effect of a mother's own unresolved frightening experience. This can emanate from women whose mother's have passed on incorrect or bad experiences to them, or the woman herself has experienced other trauma in the past.

Some women will actively seek out an obstetrician who will perform an elective caesarean section before becoming pregnant for the first time. Some women never overcome their fear and remain childless or want to adopt. Many feel shame at their perceived inadequacy. Some women enter the menopause having never given birth to a much-wanted baby and grieve this loss into old age.

Secondary Tokophobia

This is due to a previous experience of traumatic birth, poor obstetric practice or medical attention, previous postnatal depression, and many other major concerns and anxieties. Poor expectations of one's own behaviour during labour, feeling 'out of control', the resurrection of distressing memories, perhaps months later, can cause further psychological concerns. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is well associated with Tokophobia. It can also occur after an obstetrically normal delivery, a miscarriage, a stillbirth, or a termination of pregnancy.

More recently, pregnant women fearful of childbirth reported a lack of trust in the obstetric team, fear of their own incompetence and fear of dying. Other studies have suggested that the greatest fear was of delivering a physically damaged or congenitally malformed child. Women who have suffered childhood sexual abuse or rape fear the experience of childbirth will revisit the distress and helplessness of abuse. Women who have already suffered during childbirth are afraid of being traumatised again.

Treatment

The treatment for Tokophobia is Psychotherapy or counselling the same treatment as for PN trauma. Having a good birth experience after a traumatic time is very healing in itself, in that it can help to give a sense of closure to a previous bad experience. Please contact us to make your appointment with one of our counselors.

Extracted from *Real Healing After Caesarean*, by Martha Jesty
www.lifecoachinginsurrey.co.uk