

champions

spring

tomball

cypress

jersey village

copperfield

bear creek

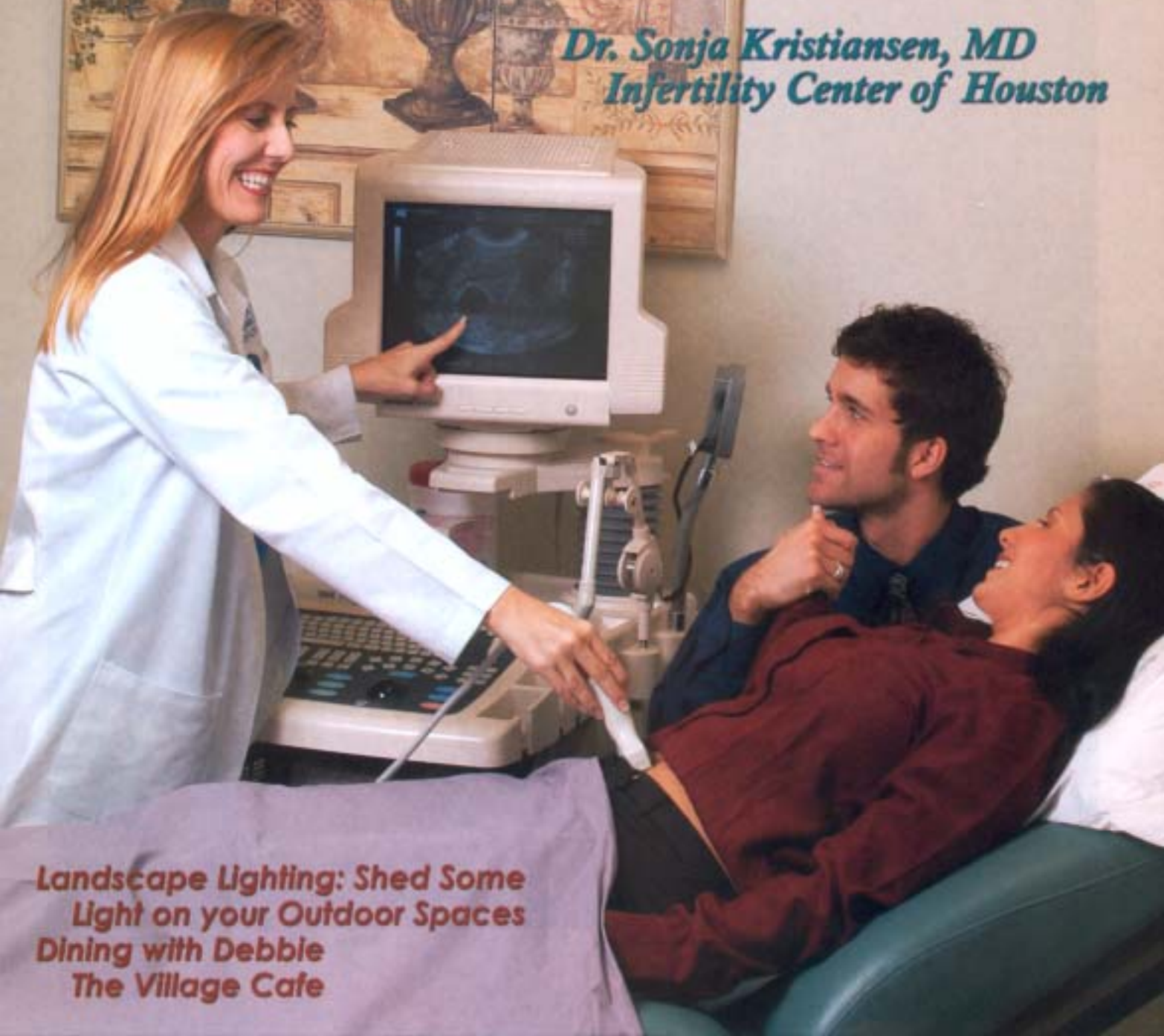
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Dr. Sonja Kristiansen, MD
Infertility Center of Houston



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Dining with Debbie
The Village Cafe

Infertility Center of Houston Making Dreams Come True

As a professional woman, Dr. Sonja Kristiansen understands why some women put marriage and motherhood on hold. She too, put her education and career first. First there was college, then medical school. Next it was her OB/GYN residency where she met and married her husband. During her rotation in residency she quickly fell in love with the surgical and technical challenges of infertility.

"Seeing the smile on the face of an infertility patient with whom we've had success with was addicting," says Dr. Kristiansen. Upon finishing her training in OB/GYN she decided to further her training another two years specializing in the field of Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility (REI). This delayed her starting her own family yet again. Eventually, at the end of her two-year fellowship at Baylor University, she had her first son, Kyle at age 34. Four long years later came her second son, Christopher at age 38.

Other women delay childbearing due to life circumstances beyond their control. As a woman's wistful dreams of holding that precious bundle of joy are put on the back burner, she may not realize how quickly her days of easily conceiving are passing by. Unfortunately headlines in the news and magazines give the impression that women in their late thirties, mid forties, even in their fifties are having babies everyday. "What those headlines don't always tell us is that many of these babies probably weren't conceived the old fashion way," says Dr. Kristiansen.

The reality is that the longer you wait the more your fertility declines and the less likely you are to get pregnant without help. "A woman's prime reproductive years are between the ages of twenty and thirty. By mid-thirties her ability to reproduce has reduced significantly. By forty for some it can be at a standstill. Waiting longer may require more technology, medication, and possibly a donor egg and or surrogate carrier," says Dr. Kristiansen.

Fulfilling Her Dream

After practicing infertility in the Houston area since 1995, Dr. Kristiansen fulfilled her dream of building her own infertility center in February 2002. She co-founded Infertility Center of Houston where she serves as the Medical Director. Having her own facility gave her the control to purchase state of the art equipment, technology which included the latest air filtration system (embryos are very susceptible to environmental elements), and hire the best staff including board certified Embryologist, Jose Hernandez, PhD who is onsite daily overseeing all lab procedures. "Our independence allows us to consider any new promising technology as it comes along. We don't have to go to a board or compete with other specialties of medical care to get the latest technology appropriated. We can act on the leading edge of research and offer every treatment possible. If it is proven to work, we'll have it here tomorrow!"

When opening her own infertility center, Dr. Kristiansen wanted to provide a full service facility that was centrally located and easily accessible. They were able to find a location on I-10 between the 610 Loop and the Sam Houston Tollway with free parking. They decided to offer very early morning appointments for patients in treatment, allowing them to arrive at work by 9:00 a.m. no matter where they worked in Houston. "Announcing that you are starting IVF to co-workers and employers might not be a good career move. Many think IVF equals multiple births which may equal long maternity leave," says Dr. Kristiansen. She quickly adds though, her current multiple pregnancy rate is below 10 percent. "We aim for one healthy baby, but occasionally over shoot and have two and rarely, very rarely, have three these days."

Infertility is a Couples' Problem

Infertility Center of Houston is a facility prepared to diagnose and treat couple's infertility problems, both the female and male. Statistically a third of the infertilities occur in women, another third in men and the last third is a combination of both or unexplained. In a couples' initial work-up, the male should undergo comprehensive semen testing.



Tick-Tock goes the Biological Clock



It's crucial to process this test shortly after collection since sperm deteriorates quickly and should be performed at an Andrology lab. Infertility Center of Houston offers full Andrology services and is staffed with an onsite board certified PhD Andrologist.

The cost for fertility treatment is a major consideration for most couples. We try to counsel patients on how to

access and best utilize their insurance benefits if they have it. Couples should consider in-vitro fertilization sooner if lower technical treatments are not working. Three failed cycles of injectable hormones with inseminations could cost almost what one IVF cycle would cost. We've also begun offering patients a variety of payment plans through PatientFinance.com, a company that specializes in financing medical procedures. Having a full service facility allows us to keep our patient's total costs down. We have a fully equipped egg retrieval suite where anesthesia is provided by board certified anesthesiologists. There are no separate fees to a hospital or outpatient facility.

Full emotional support is a high priority for Dr. Kristiansen. "We know our patients face life altering issues here," says Dr. Kristiansen. We offer and encourage emotional and stress counseling. Kathy Stern, a licensed counselor who specializes in infertility also provides counseling for all our third party donors, surrogates and the couples who will be the recipients. Egg donors and surrogates can offer a high rate of successful pregnancy for those who would otherwise be unable to conceive with their own egg or carry a pregnancy. For the patients who prefer to add a holistic approach to their fertility treatment, Dr. Kristiansen is open to working with acupuncturists and nutritional therapists who specialize in fertility.

Fertility treatment with Dr. Kristiansen is also available for those who live outside the Houston area. Dr. Kristiansen works with OB/GYNs outside Houston, even outside the United States, coordinating a patient's treatment cycle via phone and fax until the patient is ready for insemination or in-vitro fertilization procedure, allowing the patient to come to Houston for a short visit rather than the whole treatment cycle.



From the most basic screening to the most advanced therapy, Dr. Kristiansen and Infertility Center of Houston offer everything from the most basic screening and least invasive therapy to the latest technical advances in infertility treatment. Among the services she offers to overcome infertility are:

Clomid Therapy: a medication protocol to induce ovulation in concert with a timed schedule of intercourse.

Intrauterine Insemination (IUI): A procedure in which sperm is added to a solution, concentrated and placed high in the uterus close to a released egg.

In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) with Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection (ICSI): Where sperm is injected directly into a retrieved egg.

Single Embryo Transfers: Used with high quality embryos to lower the potential of multiple births.

Preimplantation Genetic Diagnosis: A single embryonic cell is analyzed for chromosomal defects in patients with family histories of genetic disorders (Cystic Fibrosis, Sickle Cell Anemia, Down's Syndrome) or patient history of repetitive miscarriages.

MicroSort Sperm Sorting: For decreased prevention of X-Linked Genetic Diseases and increased ability of Family Balancing (Gender Selection). The male's sperm determines the sex of the baby, male or female. MicroSort is a patented process that separates the male and female sperm prior to fertilization. After separation, the sperm is used in conjunction with an IVF/ICSI procedure at our facility.

Other services provided by Dr. Kristiansen include Sperm and Embryo Cryopreservation and Storage, treatment for Endocrine disorders relating to fertility such as Thyroid, PCOS, Hypotism, and Pituitary. Advanced Laparoscopic skill in Tubal Anastomosis (tubal reversal) and Endometriosis. A complete list with discussion can be found on her website.



The security minded will be impressed with precautions taken at the center to protect incubating and frozen specimens. High security however is not obvious and the clinical feeling is lessened thanks to lovely, relaxing décor and warm supportive staff.

If you are struggling with infertility and having a child is a part of your dream for the future, let Dr. Kristiansen help make that dream come true.

For more information contact Sonja Kristiansen, MD, at Infertility Center of Houston, 9055 Katy Freeway, Suite 450, Houston, TX 77024, 713.862.6181 or 800.886.5862, www.drkristiansen.com.