

## Gender Choices: Should Parents Choose Baby's Sex?

### *Some Doctors Oppose Sex Selection, While Parents Go Ahead With It*

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**CHICAGO** – It's a question almost every pregnant woman gets asked. Do you want a boy or a girl?

In some countries, like China and India, there's always been a preference for boys. And now, some doctors in the U.S. are helping couples to choose the sex of their child.

Everywhere you look around the Riley house, you see boys.

Carrie and Rick Riley have four boys – ages 17, 13, 12 and 9.

But the couple also wanted a girl. And during her last pregnancy, Carrie Riley thought she would never have one.

"We had a sonogram and they told me it was another boy. I sobbed," she said. "I mean, not that he isn't perfect, but I just knew that we were going to be done after that one, and I wanted the girl."

Nine years later, the Rileys are getting the girl they want, using in-vitro fertilization.

"The ability to select the correct embryos is 100 percent accurate," said Dr. Randy Morris, a Chicago fertility specialist.

Even though it's not medically necessary, Morris extracted eggs from Riley's ovaries. The eggs are then fertilized outside the womb. And in three days, the embryos are sorted by their chromosomes, and the girls are separated from the boys.

"The blue corresponds to the X chromosomes," Morris explained.

A small blue and larger gold dot represent the X and Y chromosomes. Two blue dots means the embryo is a girl.

The boy embryos will either be frozen and stored or discarded. Two of the girl embryos are implanted inside Riley's womb.

"I feel really good. I'm really excited," she said.

But gender selection, without a medical reason, remains very controversial, NBC5's Nesita Kwan reported. Morris is one of the few specialists in the country willing to do it.

"This is human nature. This is what people want," Morris said. "It's not for me or anybody else to say what they can or cannot do."

But Dr. Lee Shulman, a gynecologist with Northwestern Medical Center, disagrees.

"I have some moral and ethical issues about trying to chose gender," he said.

Like many American gynecologists, Shulman has moral objections to the non-medical use of gender selection. And he doesn't think it will guarantee happiness.

"People are under the impression that if they have two boys and one girl, or two girls and one boy, that somehow they are going to have this happy life, some 'Ozzie and Harriet' lifestyle – that everything is going to be perfect," Schulman said. "And you can't predict outcomes. Family composition doesn't guarantee happiness or unhappiness."

Others call selecting gender playing God, and suggest that it may lead to designer children with certain hair or eye colors.

According to an ethics publication by the American College of Gynecology and Obstetrics, the group, "Opposes meeting requests for sex selection for personal and family reasons, such as family balancing, because of the concern that such requests may ultimately support sexist practices."

"You know it's not like I'm trying to get rid of all girls or all boys. It's not like that. I just want to balance things out. So no I don't have an issue with it at all," Carrie Riley said.

She added that worries about potential abuses have nothing to do with her decision. When Kwan reported this story on July 20, Riley was pregnant with a girl.

"I've always wanted a girl," she said. "I want to do the hair and the dance lessons, the wedding dress – just all of it."

The Riley boys say they are looking forward to a sister, too. And they're already trying to figure out how to get along.

#### **On The Net:**

- PDF: American College of Gynecology and Obstetrics Ethics Statement On Gender Selection  
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