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TRENDING
By Korin Miller

Chrissy Teigen And John Legend Chose The Sex Of Their Baby—Here's How That's Possible

The supermodel and her music man faced some serious backlash after revealing the decision last week.



Chrissy Teigen and John Legend have received a lot of attention after the pregnant supermodel revealed that the couple chose the sex of their baby while undergoing in vitro fertilization—and not all of it was friendly. Many took to Twitter to criticize the couple for picking a girl over a boy (and for undergoing IVF rather than adopting).

But the act of picking an embryo of one sex versus the other is not as complicated or controversial a matter as it may at first appear.

Teigen revealed the news that she and Legend are expecting a girl by choice in an interview

with *People* magazine last week. “I’ve made this decision,” Teigen told *People*. “Not only am I having a girl, but I picked the girl from her little embryo. I picked her and was like, ‘Let’s put in the girl.’”

The couple quickly received backlash for their choice, which Teigen (famous for her Twitter retorts) later defended online.

“You’d be surprised at how many people you know go through this,” she wrote on Twitter. “Also every doctor knows the sex of the embryos, it isn’t some grand secret.” (Teigen also joked that she “picked the embryo with a taste for bacon, a knack for magic and size 7 feet so she can always find shoes.”)

Teigen is right—plenty of couples undergoing IVF chose the sex of their baby, says [Mark Surrey, M.D.](#), medical director and co-founder of [Southern California Reproductive Center](#). “It’s very common for couples undergoing IVF to choose the sex of their baby, because it is information that you can obtain by genetically testing the embryos for their chromosomes,” he says. “The gender is simply one of their chromosomes.”

The gender is part of an elective IVF procedure called Pre-Implantation Genetic Diagnosis (PGD), in which a complete chromosomal analysis of each embryo is done.

PGD was originally designed to help screen for genetic disorders such as cystic fibrosis and Down syndrome, says reproductive endocrinology and infertility specialist Jane Frederick, M.D., medical director of HRC Fertility in Orange County, California. The gender information came along with the screening, she says, and eventually couples starting requesting the testing for gender purposes.

However, Frederick says she mostly gets this request from couples that already have children and want to balance out the genders. “They really want to maximize the next pregnancy so it’s the last one,” she says. And, like Teigen and Legend, Frederick has found that most couples want to have a girl. “Eighty percent of the requests are ‘Can you get me a girl?’” she says. “It’s very female-driven and many women want to have daughters.”

For PGD, a fertility clinic will grow an embryo to day five, at which point it has 100 cells, Frederick explains. One is removed and undergoes chromosomal testing to make sure it’s viable and healthy. “We can rule out all of the things that can cause an abnormal pregnancy,” she says.

Frederick says the process doesn’t seem to damage the embryo or the baby that is formed from it, but she stresses that couples should make sure the clinic they use is accredited and has been doing this procedure for years.

And, according to Surrey, the process is 99 percent accurate.

Experts expect that even more couples undergoing IVF will request the testing in the future, but Frederick points out that PGD comes at an added cost to an already expensive procedure (it’s an additional \$4,000 or more at some clinics). “Unfortunately, the technology is still expensive,” she says. “If we could offer this as part of the IVF cycle, I imagine we could eliminate a lot of genetic problems in addition to a healthy gender that a couple is striving for.”

Teigen said on Twitter that she and Legend froze the other embryos for future use, and hinted that the next one will also be a girl—but the one after that is going to be a boy.

<http://www.self.com/trending/2016/02/chrissy-teigen-and-john-legend-chose-the-sex-of-their-baby-heres-how-thats-possible/>