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## Premature Ovarian Failure Syndrome (POF) – Actually quite common.

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Premature Ovarian Failure Syndrome (POF) is associated with an elevated FSH (follicle stimulating hormone) level. Symptoms include:

- Hot flashes
- Increased insomnia
- Vaginal dryness
- Irregular periods
- Loss of periods entirely in women less than 40 years of age.

POF is actually quite common. There are four sub-types of POF, so the initial medical evaluation or fertility testing should determine which type a patient has.

- The most common is an autoimmune ovarian failure, in which a patient's own antibodies "burn out" the eggs and ovaries. Interestingly, for autoimmune POF patients, birth control pills may work backwards by actually increasing the chances of ovulation and conception, but with a relatively low pregnancy success rate.
- The second cause of POF is if a woman has mumps as an adolescent (after age 10), many of her eggs may "burn out," which oftentimes results in POF. Many women are unaware that they've had an ovarian mumps infection until they are diagnosed with POF.
- The third cause of POF is Savage Syndrome, resulting from abnormal FSH hormone receptors. An experimental method to treat Savage Syndrome involves laparoscopic removal of half of one ovary, thinly slicing it, removing and maturing the eggs, and then fertilizing them using an IVF treatment.
- Finally, POF may be idiopathic, meaning a specific cause cannot be found.

If POF is diagnosed early, and the FSH level isn't significantly elevated, a patient has a reasonable chance of achieving pregnancy.

However, a significant number of women with POF need to undergo a donor egg IVF procedure to become pregnant.

Call FVRM at 920-560-5585 or your personal primary care physician with questions or for the most appropriate treatment option for your situation.