

Family-building and fertility support for Black families



Hi, we're Maven, and we are here to support you on your family-building journey.

We work every day to fill the gaps in the traditional healthcare system. Through our app, we offer members 24/7, free, virtual care with doctors and coaches in over 35 specialties that support fertility and pregnancy. You'll also find classes in everything from breastfeeding to navigating IVF, and community resources to connect with others going through similar experiences.

Maven puts Black and Brown parents in the driver's seat of their care, no matter where you are on your family-building journey. Whether you are:

- Just beginning to think about starting a family
- In the early stages of trying to conceive
- Facing infertility challenges
- Or looking for additional ways to grow your family through adoption or surrogacy

We have built a place for you to find the care you need, when you need it. We are intentional in our support because the fact is, healthcare has not been built with Black and Brown families at the center. Recent data shows that 22% of Black women receive lower quality care. Many studies have shown that Black and Brown women are disproportionately affected by infertility and are more likely to experience reproductive health disorders such as fibroids and endometriosis.



For Black women, early and accurate diagnosis and treatment for these conditions is essential. While some health systems and medical schools are implementing racial education training, Black women still face persistent barriers to access that make it necessary for them to advocate for themselves. We see you and your unique needs, and we want to change that.

In this guide, you'll learn:

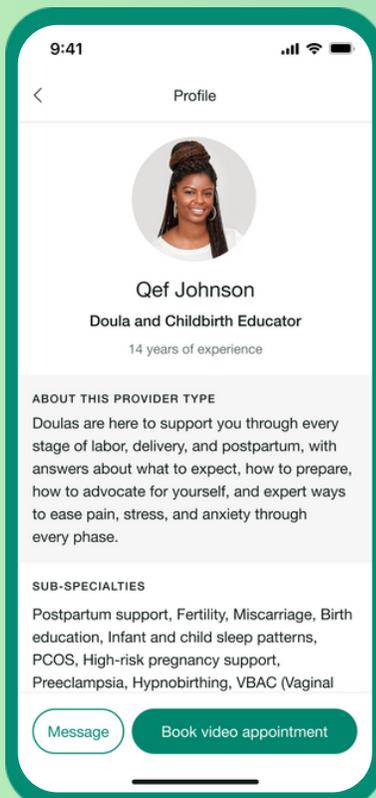
- How to practice self-advocacy in fertility and family-building
- How Maven supports members through culturally humble care
- How Maven's diverse provider network fills in gaps to address systemic issues members are facing

We are here around the clock to provide coaching, education, and support, along with referrals for in-person care if you need it. Maven is committed to decreasing gaps in care for Black and Brown families and increasing access to compassionate, empowering support for all.

At Maven, every day is a great day to celebrate Black and Brown women and families. We hear you, we see you, and we support you. It is our privilege to be a part of your journey.

How Black women can *advocate for themselves* when starting a family

With Qef Johnson
Birth and Postpartum Doula



Qef Johnson is a Maven birth and postpartum doula trained in fertility support and childbirth education.

Here, she shares how Black women and families can advocate for themselves as they start and build their families.

Qef's recommendations to read and watch

- [Aftershock](#), directed by Tonya Lewis Lee and Paula Eiselt
- [Crib Sheet](#), by Emily Oster
- [The Big Letdown](#), by Kimberly Seals Allers
- [The Business of Being Born](#), directed by Abby Epstein

What is the cultural conversation about fertility in the Black community?

Qef Johnson: Fertility issues, which are very prevalent in the Black community, come from a lot of different factors. These include stress, systemic racism in healthcare, and environmental factors, like hair products that could affect hormone levels. I also see a lot of Black women disproportionately dealing with conditions like fibroids and PCOS. But in the Black community, it's hard to talk about fertility, and Black women often don't get the assistance and support they need from providers for these issues.

What does self-advocacy look like for Black women and families?

QJ: Throughout fertility and family building, Black women need to advocate for themselves by being assertive and educating themselves. One of my main tips is to make a list of your needs and have it written down so you can easily reference it. If something feels wrong, over explain and over-share how you feel, especially if you're in pain or unhappy. Sometimes you have to gather your strength to advocate for your needs, no matter what judgment you face.

How does Maven support Black women and families?

QJ: The huge gap I see in traditional healthcare is the lack of access to specialty care. Maven provides easy access to a diverse virtual network of doulas, childbirth educators, and other specialized providers for no additional cost. Maven also prioritizes care matching, so members can meet with providers and Care Advocates who understand and share their backgrounds. Black women and families deserve great care, just like everyone else.



What is care matching?

Research indicates that care matching, or being paired with providers of the same race, ethnicity, gender identity, and/or sexual orientation as you are, can have a positive impact on a care journey and health outcomes. When you join Maven, you are paired with a personalized Care Team that can support your specific care preferences. During your introduction chat with your Care Advocate, let them know if you're interested in more providers who share your background.



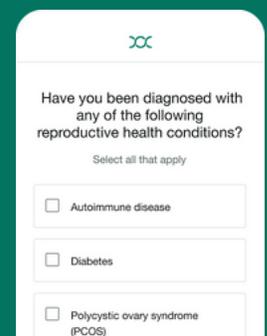
Meet Mia and Elias

Mia and Elias, a mid-30's Black couple are ready to have kids. They are having trouble conceiving naturally and want to understand their options. Mia was recently diagnosed with PCOS and hopes to understand how the condition may impact her ability to get pregnant.

01.

Downloading the Maven Clinic app and enrolling in fertility support

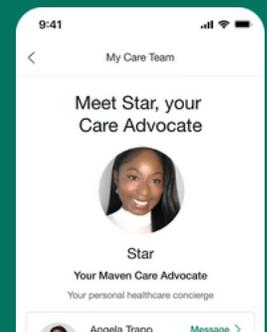
Mia downloads the Maven Clinic app on her phone and begins the enrollment process. As she enters her information, she selects the Maven Fertility program. She continues to answer questions about her health history, including her PCOS diagnosis.



02.

Meeting with her dedicated Care Advocate

Following her initial assessment, Mia meets her dedicated Care Advocate. Her Care Advocate walks Mia through all of Maven's services and learns more about Mia's expectations and health history as she begins the family-building journey. She also notes Mia's preference to receive care from Black providers.



03.

Accessing a personalized team of providers

Mia's Care Team consists of a fertility awareness educator, nutritionist, reproductive endocrinologist, and mental health provider. Mia schedules virtual appointments with each provider for free.

04.

Exploring articles & classes within the Maven App

Mia explores clinically-vetted articles in the Maven app that pertain to her journey and reviews Maven's upcoming virtual and on-demand classes.

05.

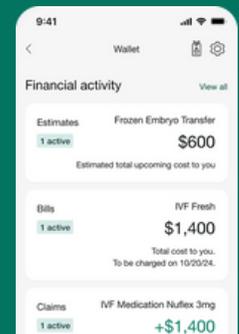
Receiving a list of high-quality in-person referrals

After meeting virtually with her Maven Care Team, Mia decides to pursue IUI and possibly IVF. Her Care Advocate refers her to a list of trusted, local fertility clinics, personalized for Mia's needs and preferences.

06.

Managing her expenses through Maven Wallet

Worried about the potential costs of her treatment, Mia talks to her Care Advocate about her expenses. Mia's employer offers reimbursement for fertility treatment, which Mia can easily access and track within the app. Mia proceeds to use Maven Wallet following each of her in-person appointments.



07.

Receiving continuous care throughout her fertility process

As she goes through the process, Mia stays connected to her Care Advocate and care team. Her Maven nutritionist and mental health provider, who are also Black, offer her emotional, physical, and mental health support through her fertility treatments.



08.

Guided support through pregnancy and postpartum

Following their first round of IVF, Mia and Elias find out they are pregnant! Their Maven Care Advocate, who has been along for their whole journey, is so excited for them and welcomes them into Maven's Maternity program. Here, their Care Advocate connects them with their updated provider team.



CLOSING NOTE

Our commitment to addressing gaps in care for Black women and families

By Dr. Dawn Godbolt
Maven's Director of Health Equity

For many people, the ability to have a child is not the straightforward process that we learn in high-school health class. The reality is that many people struggle with infertility. When we factor in the social determinants of health, the conditions in which people live, work, and play, we see stark disparities in access to reproductive health technologies like IVF and family-building pathways like surrogacy across race lines. Black women, in comparison to white women, are:

Twice as likely to experience infertility

Less likely to be treated for infertility

Have less success after the use of fertility technologies

These inequities are not due to personal choice or biological differences. Structural forces create systems of inequality that manifest in health outcomes like fertility disparities. As individuals considering your own healthcare needs, you deserve to know that your provider is aware of these disparities and is working to address them, while showing up for you with empathy and respect.

Drawing from the [reproductive justice framework](#), Maven understands that gaps in our healthcare system undermine the family planning journey of those who have historically been left behind.

At Maven, we believe that all people should have access to the full range of high-quality reproductive health support they need, including assisted reproductive health technology, regardless of skin color, zip code, or any other social status that might present as a barrier to care. This belief extends to how people receive care on our platform: Maven provides highly personalized support tailored to each of our members' specific health and social needs.



We have specialized programs designed to address high-risk conditions and our care providers are trained to provide culturally appropriate and relevant care. We also understand that the ability to have a care provider who looks like you is a privilege that many do not experience, and so we offer a diverse provider network with over 40% of our providers identifying as people of color. We work to match members with providers with shared lived experiences, including ethnic background and language preferences.

An expansive body of literature demonstrates that Black women and families benefit from the type of person-centered health care that Maven offers. As you embark on your own family building journey, know that Maven is here to support you at every step.

In sisterhood,

Dawn

Dawn Godbolt, PhD
Director of Health Equity





∞ MAVEN

Join Maven in minutes

Scan the QR code or visit
mavenclinic.com/join/content to get started.

