Good news for women considering in vitro fertilization (IVF): Improved technology has increased the likelihood that they'll give birth to a healthy singleton from just one implanted embryo instead of having to navigate the health risks associated with multiple births.

IVF currently accounts for 1 percent of U.S. births each year, but it's responsible for 17 percent of twins. This, of course, is because the procedure has traditionally relied on the implantation of multiple embryos to increase a woman's chances of becoming pregnant. The problem, however, is that a multiple birth raises risks for both the mother and the baby, including gestational diabetes, premature birth, and various disorders and diseases in the child.

Now, a study just published in *Fertility and Sterility* has found that using a single embryo for IVF instead of multiple embryos actually resulted in a nearly 10 percent increase in the number of babies born to healthy women younger than 38. Even better, the proportion of women with multiple births dropped to nearly half of what it had been. The data comes from a fertility clinic at the University of Iowa, Iowa City, where authors looked at IVF birth rates for the five years before and after the clinic instituted a single embryo transfer policy.

ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross is impressed with the quality of the study; he agrees with others in the medical community who see single embryo transfer soon becoming the norm thus making IVF a less risky option than it has been.