



# Tips to Boost Your Fertility

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

There are a number of factors that can influence your fertility and which you have no control over, but you can take steps to maximise your chances of conception. Some factors that influence fertility affect both partners, but we will endeavour to cover them separately for males and females.

## Female

- **Diet & Exercise:** It is recommended to follow a sensible diet and exercise program both before and during pregnancy. Women who are either markedly overweight or underweight may have trouble conceiving. A 5-10% reduction in weight can make a significant difference to your fertility health.  
  
A healthy, balanced diet rich in lean proteins and fresh fruit and vegetables is important. Regular moderate exercise for an average of 30 minutes per session at least three times per week is recommended.
- **Smoking:** Apart from the long-term health risks, smoking is one of the biggest lifestyle factors that can negatively affect fertility. Among women, smoking has been shown to increase the risk of miscarriage, premature birth and babies with low birth weight. Smoking should therefore be avoided before conception and throughout pregnancy.
- **Alcohol:** Alcohol consumption should be eliminated or at least restricted before and after conception. Alcohol can reduce the number of eggs produced and increase the risk of miscarriage and birth defects.
- **Stress:** The process of trying to conceive can be stressful and research shows that women under stress produce prolactin, which can interfere with regular ovulation. Relaxation methods such as yoga and meditation can be beneficial in helping to reduce stress levels.
- **Caffeine:** Caffeine comes in many guises, not just our daily coffee. High consumption of caffeine has been shown to increase the risk of miscarriage, so limit your daily intake to just one or two cups of coffee daily. Remember that chocolate, colas and energy drinks all have caffeine in them, so you may be consuming more than you are aware of.
- **Folic Acid:** You need to be taking a folic acid supplement for at least one month before trying to conceive.
- **Recreational Drugs:** Recreational drugs can increase the risk of birth defects and also cause medical problems in the mother. Therefore, they should be avoided before conception and during pregnancy.
- **Lubricants:** These may affect the sperm quality so should be avoided if you are trying to conceive.
- **Toxins:** We are faced with a variety of environmental toxins on a daily basis. If you work with or around toxins, you need to be using protective face masks etc. Talk with your doctor or specialist if you have any concerns.

## Male

- **Diet and Exercise:** As with females, diet and exercise play an important role in male fertility health. To produce good-quality sperm, men should also try to maintain a healthy body weight and do regular moderate exercise.

A diet rich in lean proteins and fresh fruit and vegetables is recommended. Men need to keep in mind that sperm is produced at slightly below body temperature, so it is important to exercise at a sensible pace and not overheat the body.

- **Keep Cool:** Because of overheating, sperm quality can be affected. The testes are outside the body to keep them cooler for a reason. Avoid hot spas, saunas, tight jeans or even sitting with your computer on your lap.
- **Smoking:** Apart from the long-term risks associated with smoking, it results in a reduced sperm count and poor sperm morphology (quality) and should therefore be avoided before conception.
- **Alcohol:** Excessive consumption of alcohol affects sperm quality, making it harder to conceive. Limit your intake if trying to conceive.
- **Stress:** Semen quality declines during periods of stress. Activities such as walking and playing golf with your friends may help to reduce your stress levels.
- **Caffeine:** There are both positives and negatives with caffeine intake for men when trying to conceive. Caffeine has been shown to boost sperm motility; however, consuming more than three cups per day or 300mg of caffeine can result in sperm DNA damage. If smoking, alcohol and caffeine are combined, sperm quality is reduced dramatically.

- **Vitamin Supplements:** Zinc deficiency can reduce testosterone levels and semen production. Taking a supplement may improve the DNA quality in sperm. We recommend taking a supplement with antioxidants and zinc. There are several formulations available so ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice. You will need to begin taking the supplement three months before conception.

- **Recreational Drugs:** Marijuana has a major impact on sperm quality and quantity. It is not advisable to use any form of recreational drug when trying to conceive or after conception.

- **Toxins:** We are faced with a wide variety of environmental toxins on a daily basis. If you work with paints, diesel fumes or pesticides, to name a few, you need to be using protective face masks etc.

Pollutants can cause DNA damage to sperm. Give them a wide berth while trying to conceive, or take all safety measures possible while using them. Talk with your doctor or specialist if you have any concerns.

- **Ejaculation Frequency:** There is a common misconception that if you “save it up” and don’t ejaculate until ovulation, you will have more sperm and achieve fertilisation. This is definitely not the case. If you “save it up”, the sperm become sluggish and there is a higher chance of DNA damage. You need to ejaculate regularly to keep the sperm healthy and motile. For best results, you should try to ejaculate every two days, especially when your partner is ovulating.

Often we are asked: “Can you ejaculate too much?” If you are ejaculating daily, this will not cause a problem for most males. The quantity of the sperm produced will be smaller but the quality should be better.

## Where to now?

### I Want More Information

- Contact our Fertility Advice Team

### I’m Ready to Take the Next Step

- Book an appointment with us
- Get a referral to First Step Fertility from your GP for a fertility health check



### Contact Us

-  1800 111 373
-  [info@firststepfertility.com.au](mailto:info@firststepfertility.com.au)
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