



Physical Causes of Infertility

Infertility has become a multi-billion dollar business filled with invasive, uncomfortable tests and doctors who may lack compassion and sensitivity for their patients. Many times the reproductive system becomes the sole focus for infertility problems. However, there are multiple links to the reproductive system that many couples do not consider or do not know about. What additional information do infertile couples need to increase their chances of pregnancy?

Although stress has become a mainstay in today's society, this does not make its effects any less damaging. Stress affects the physical body as well as affecting fertility levels. Stress may cause the fallopian tube to spasm and this spasm may prevent the sperm and egg from actually meeting. Stress may also prevent the lining of the uterus from being properly prepared. Thus, women who have perfectly normal reproductive systems but carry a high level of stress may decrease their chances of becoming pregnant.

In times of constant stress, the immune system decreases. When the immune system decreases, the body loses its defense system against viruses such as HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) and herpes. Though HPV and herpes alone will not cause infertility, consider that many cases of HPV may lead to invasive procedures in order to remove abnormal cervical cells. In turn, this may lead directly to problems with conception. Thus, it is vital for both partners to be honest about any history of sexually transmitted diseases (STD's). In addition to HPV, STD's left untreated such as chlamydia and gonorrhea are strong cases for tubal disease and ensuing infertility.

One way to uphold a strong immune system and decrease stress on the body is through proper nutrition. A high-quality diet and eating regular meals will keep hormones, oocytes and sperm healthy. Skipping meals and lowering the blood sugar may lead to increased stress, irritability and anxiety. It is important to stay away from sugar and flour as the body may be overwhelmed by yeast. It is also important to stay away from partially hydrogenated oils since the body cannot easily manipulate or

process them. A general guideline is to use oils that can be eaten, such as extra virgin olive oil. Eating organic fruits, vegetables and meat will help the body to detoxify from overly processed foods. Preparing colorful foods to coordinate with a specific chakra (energy vortex) color (especially the first and second chakra for infertility) will enhance balance in the body. Above all, it is vital to read labels and avoid fats and caffeine as much as possible. Environment may also play a role in infertility as people are overwhelmed with estrogens and toxins every day. Mineral oil, found in many skin products, is a carcinogenic and a by-product of petroleum. Regular dairy and meat may be injected with hormones that can throw the body out of balance. Too much soy in the diet may equal too much estrogen (especially if a person is sensitive) and soy intake should be closely monitored.

Although infertility procedures may be unavoidable, it is imperative for couples to understand the repercussions of Western procedures. These procedures may cause adrenal fatigue so that even if a couple did get pregnant, the body may not want to keep the pregnancy. Options such as acupuncture, yoga, Reiki, infertility massage and hypnosis are all viable alternatives to some of these symptomatic Western procedures and should be considered. Acupuncture has attained special acclaim as it has the ability to balance the body's autonomic nervous system, enhance blood flow to the uterus, regulate a woman's menstrual cycle and help patients relax from the daily stresses of life.

Ultimately, there are numerous causes of infertility. It is important for couples to not only explore their reproductive systems, but their stress level, immune system, diet and environmental factors as well. Alternative therapies may act as a powerful adjunct to Western medicine and may provide opportunities to bring the entire body into balance in a gentle and holistic way.

This article was written by **Dr. Christine Brass-Jones, D.O.** & Stasia Minkowsky, as a patient education resource for The Center for True Harmony Wellness and Medicine.

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