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COLUMBIA FERTILITY
ASSOCIATES



The Fertility Fact Quiz
*(What You Don't Know
Could Affect Your Fertility)*

True or False?

Sexual positions don't affect your chances of conception.

True - There are no studies confirming that one position is more effective than any other in achieving pregnancy. In fact, sperm can be found in the cervical canal in mere seconds after ejaculation, regardless of position. Aiming for the deepest vaginal penetration and maximum cervical contact makes sense, but the optimal position varies because every woman's body is different.

And since sperm start swimming immediately after ejaculation, it isn't necessary for a woman to become a gymnast or a yoga master to make a baby. There may be a little advantage to lying around after sexual intercourse to keep the sperm inside you, but there's absolutely no value in practicing hand stands. So savor the romantic endeavor in whatever position best fits the mood.

Smoking during pregnancy is a no-no.

True - According to the CDC, "The dangers of smoking during pregnancy include premature birth (being born too early), certain birth defects, and infant death."



- Smoking makes it harder for a woman to get pregnant.
- Women who smoke during pregnancy are more likely than non-smoking women to have a miscarriage.
- Smoking can cause **problems with the placenta** —the source of the baby's food and oxygen during pregnancy. For example, the placenta can separate from the womb too early, causing bleeding, which is dangerous to the mother and baby.
- Smoking during pregnancy can cause a baby to be **born too early** or to have low birth weight—making it more likely the baby will be sick and have to stay in the hospital longer. A few babies may even die.
- Smoking during and after pregnancy (when infant is born) is a risk factor of **Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)**.
 - Babies born to women who smoke are more likely to have certain birth defects, like a cleft lip or cleft palate.

How Does Smoking During Pregnancy Harm My Health and My Baby?

Men, stay out of the hot tub if you're trying to conceive!

True - Heat can play a detrimental role with sperm count. The rise in scrotal temperature can temporarily reduce sperm production. So if a man is relaxing in a hot tub or sauna or even sitting with a laptop computer on his legs for an extended period of time, it can cause body temperature to rise in the genital area. It has been suggested that wearing boxers when trying to conceive may be helpful. Keep in mind that sperm production tends to increase in cooler temperatures, so sperm count is often higher in the winter months than in the summer. Time of day can also affect men's sperm count as it tends to be higher in the morning when hormone levels are higher.



Fact and Fiction About Male Fertility

Flossing is not important to your fertility.

False - Ever think you're too tired to brush your teeth or look at the floss and think it would be okay to skip it tonight? Think again.

Women trying to get pregnant should keep their teeth clean, a fertility expert told a 2011 meeting in Sweden. During the meeting, delegates heard about preliminary research that found for the first time, from when a woman starts trying to conceive, that her chances of becoming pregnant can depend on how well she looks after her teeth and gums. Women who want to become pregnant should visit their dentist and brush their teeth regularly.

Roger Hart, a professor at the University of Western Australia in Perth, told the 2011 annual meeting of the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology in Stockholm, that the effect of gum disease on conception is about the same order of magnitude as the effect of obesity.

They found that women with gum disease took an average of seven months instead of five months to conceive compared to women without gum disease. That's two extra months! Even worse, non-Caucasian women appeared to be most affected. They were likely to take more than 12 months to become pregnant if they were plagued with gum disease. Hart cited the reason that non-Caucasian women were the most affected was because they appeared to have the highest level of inflammatory response when suffering from gum disease.

Professor Hart said there was also evidence gum disease in men impaired sperm quality. If you're trying to conceive, Hart recommends daily flossing and regular dental visits. In addition, he suggests stopping smoking, abstaining from alcohol, keeping your weight in check, and taking prenatal vitamins that include folic acid.

So get flossing, and if you or your sweetie haven't been to the dentist in a while, make an appointment, stat.

If I'm underweight, I should have no problem conceiving!

False - Surprise! Women need body fat to have menstrual periods. Eating too healthy, poor diet and excessive exercise have been linked to infertility. Optimal Body Mass Index (BMI) is 19-25 for conception. If your BMI is below this, your ability to conceive is greatly affected. An average of 22 percent body fat is necessary for normal ovulation and reproductive fitness. A woman needs a minimum of 17% body fat to ovulate. Many elite athletes are far below that and will eventually stop menstruating. On the other side of the scale, being overweight can also cause fertility issues.

Weight related fertility issues can easily be resolved by gaining or shedding a few pounds. Altering your weight by just a few pounds can revitalize your hormone chemistry in many instances.

Pregnancy is impacted by weight as well. Underweight women are more likely to deliver a low birth weight baby while overweight women who become pregnant are at greater risk for pregnancy-related high blood pressure and diabetes. If you are at a reasonable weight and trying to conceive, now is not the time to begin training for a marathon or go on a crash diet. If you want to check your BMI, visit this link [Healthy Weight: Assessing Your Weight: BMI: Adult BMI Calculator: English | DNPAO | CDC](#).

Ease up on your seafood intake.

True - Limit your mercury intake. Shark, swordfish, and mackerel typically contain high levels of mercury, which is associated with infertility, miscarriage, and birth defects. Ingested mercury can take over a year to get out of your system. Limit your mercury intake well before you're ready to conceive. Don't go overboard and eliminate seafood altogether. It's packed with protein and other essential nutrients. Just stick to two meals a week of low-mercury seafood like shrimp, salmon, and light tuna. If you want to monitor your mercury levels, check out this [online mercury calculator](#).



Vitamin D is important for fertility.

True - As stated in an abstract from the European Journal of Endocrinology, vitamin D may enhance semen quality and androgen status and vitamin D treatment might even increase testosterone levels. In this same study, when looking at females, vitamin D might influence steroidogenesis of sex hormones (estradiol and progesterone) in healthy women. In patients with polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), low levels of vitamin D are “associated with obesity, metabolic, and endocrine disturbances and vitamin D supplementation might improve menstrual frequency and metabolic disturbances in those women.”

Other studies have shown that reducing inflammation and the production of inflammatory cytokines may lower the risk of miscarriage.

So check with your fertility doctor to make sure you and your partner are getting enough vitamin D!

The Benefits of A Vitamin D Enriched Diet



Bluetooth is not sperm-friendly.

True -Men, be mindful of where you carry your cell phone or other Bluetooth devices. Several studies have shown that the radiofrequent electromagnetic waves of cell phones and Bluetooth devices can have a damaging effect on not only one’s body but more specifically on the male reproductive system. In a 2011 article published in the Open Reproductive Science Journal it was suggested that cell phones and other cellular devices were capable of generating electrical currents having the ability to alter the hormone environment and the testicular microenvironment necessary for sperm production, motility, morphology and volume.

In 2008, the Cleveland Clinic researchers published an article in *Fertility and Sterility* indicating men should be wary of using hands-free device with a cell phone in a pant pocket. After collecting semen samples from 32 men, they divided each sample into two specimens. One half was placed about an inch away from a 850 MHz frequency cell phone in talk mode for an hour. (Most U.S. cell phones are 850-900 MHz.) The distance used is the typical distance between the testes and pant pockets. Findings affirmed prior research indicating radiofrequency electromagnetic waves emitted from cell phones can impair sperm quality. Semen exposed to radiofrequency electromagnetic waves emitter from cell phones had higher levels of damaging free radicals, lower sperm motility (ability to move and swim), viability and possibly greater oxidative stress. No significant difference in DNA damage was found between the exposed and unexposed groups.

Futures studies are slated for the effect of radiofrequency electromagnetic waves emitted from greater distances such as 2, 3 or 4 inches.

If you're trying to father a child, it might be a good idea to refrain from storing your cell phone or Bluetooth device near your lap any time it is turned on.

Relaxing has no effect on fertility!

False - Reducing stress in your life can most certainly assist in conception. Dr. Brad Miller, at Reproductive Medicine Associates of Michigan, recommends that patients take time out to relax when they are dealing with infertility issues. Get a massage, meditate or practice yoga to reduce your stress levels---even better do this as a couple or make it a date night event! But it's not just natural (unassisted) pregnancies that are affected. In research published in *Fertility and Sterility* in 2005, experts at the University of California at San Diego reported that stress may play a role in the success of infertility treatments, including in vitro fertilization (IVF).

Yoga will affect my chances of conception.

True - If you have a problem relaxing, it might be time to check out that yoga or Tai Chi class you have always wanted to try. The Mind Body Medical Institute (MBMI) did a study using 185 women, who had been trying to conceive for at least one and up to two years. They divided them up into three groups. The first was put into a ten week long Mind/Body training program, the second was put into a support group, and the third was the test group. Conception percentages were as follows:

Mind/Body Group – 55%
Support Group – 54%
Control Group – 20%

Semen exposed to cellphones had higher levels of damaging free radicals, lower sperm motility, viability, etc.

Those who were in the Mind/Body training program also reported more dramatic positive psychological changes in terms of reduced stress and lower instances of depression than those in the other groups.

There are four published studies using a similar Mind/Body Program for Fertility, designed to reduce stress and increase relaxation in women who have been trying to conceive for 3.5 years or more. 42% of the women who completed the program conceived their own baby. So while studies have a hard time pinpointing exactly why stress affects fertility, studies are clearly indicating that the more relaxed and mentally/emotionally healthy women are, the better their chances are of conceiving.

I can eat whatever I want while trying to get pregnant.

False - We all know drive-thrus are not the best source of whole, nutritious foods, which are recommended for everyone, especially those who are trying to conceive. It turns out that microwave popcorn, pizza boxes, candy wrappers, and fast food wrappers almost always contain chemicals called Perfluorooctanoate (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS). They are also found in firefighting foams, synthetic clothing, personal care products and paper wrappers. In other words, this stuff is everywhere. It is manmade, and it seems to have some kind of disruptive effect on the hormones responsible for menstruation and ovulation, according to a study done by Harvard University. In order to have a control group, the researchers used women in underdeveloped countries, where these processed foods and fast food chains are much less prevalent. Interestingly enough, developed countries have significantly higher rates of infertility than underdeveloped countries, which is one reason why researchers pay such close attention to the link between foods, pesticides, and chemicals that we are exposed to here in the U.S.



It turned out that women who are more heavily exposed to the aforementioned chemicals have more frequently disrupted menstrual cycles, which means their ovulation cycles are disrupted as well. This makes it harder for them to conceive. Moral of the story – you have one more reason to avoid processed foods, fast foods, and products with labels that are difficult to pronounce. Keep an eye out for PFOS and PFOA on your personal care products as well.

Maternal levels of perfluorinated chemicals and subfecundity

I don't need to think about lubrication.

False - It is all fun and games until you are trying to conceive, right? Well, if you are serious about it, you might want to pass on the lubrication when you know your body is approaching, and in the midst of, ovulation. Several studies have shown that sperm have a harder time swimming through lubrication that is not made specifically for intercourse – and this most specifically includes saliva. You can read a comprehensive paper authored by Dr. Brad Miller about this topic in *Fertility and Sterility* (1994;61:1171-73). If you're trying to conceive, you should avoid lubricants that could injure sperm.

A 1998 study, published in a medical journal titled *Human Reproduction*, tested the effects of olive oil, KY Jelly, Baby Oil, and saliva on sperm. Sperm motility, aka their ability to move, was noticeably affected by the addition of lubrication, and not in a good way. While it may increase your motility, those highly prized sperm begin to flounder in its presence. Baby Oil had the least negative effect, while saliva has the most. Perhaps this has to do with the digestive enzymes already present in human saliva? Who knows? What we do know is that the authors were very clear in their conclusion: “we would recommend that couples – especially those having difficulty in conceiving – should be aware of the detrimental effects of such lubricants and avoid their use.”

The good news? When you are most fertile, your body begins to produce a substance called fertile cervical mucus. It looks like, and has the consistency of, egg whites and is an indicator that you are about to ovulate. Plus, it should provide the necessary lubrication you need to get down to business, without having to use sperm-debilitating lubricants.

The effects of coital lubricants on sperm motility in vitro.



Sex before ovulation might be best.

True -By now, you probably already know that sperm can live for an average of a few days once they are deposited into the vagina. But did you also know that you are fertile for the several days before you ovulate, as well as the day you ovulate. This means waiting for that basal temp spike could mean you are a little late, or depriving your egg of the sperm that could have been waiting for its arrival. So, rather than waiting for the exact day of your ovulation, it is always a good idea to pre-load the pipes, so to speak. The best time to do that is when your own, natural lubricants, are ready and waiting to do their job.

According to the University of North Carolina, “Changes in mucus quality across the fertile interval predict the observed pattern in the day-specific probabilities of conception. To maximize the likelihood of conception, intercourse should occur on days with optimal mucus quality, as observed in vaginal discharge, regardless of the exact timing relative to ovulation.” The more sperm that have access to this web-like mucus, the more sperm will be guided directly to their target when ovulation occurs.

This is great news for several reasons, the least of which are it relieves the pressure from the whole “perfect temperature, perfect day, perfect time scenario” that can ruin the romance altogether, and it gives you the freedom to enjoy sex for multiple days on end, knowing that you are working on building your own sperm bank, so to speak, in the perfect environment for conception.

Mucus observations in the fertile window: a better predictor of conception than timing of intercourse

There is very little technology to help me get pregnant.

False -Did you know there are apps for determining when you are most likely to be fertile? If you are tired of marking the calendar, forgetting to mark the calendar, etc., there are several apps you can install that can help to keep track for you. This is especially important because most of the ovulation models you read about are based on a “traditional” 28-day cycle, and hello? Not all women fall into the “traditional” model. When you use an app, you can more accurately track your own, personal, and unique cycle, and learn about your ovulation accordingly.

Some of the best Apps to increase your fertility chances are:

Woman Calendar by Apple. Woman Calendar costs \$10 and tracks all the pertinent information, including sexual activity and will plot it all out in fancy charts and graphs for the visual learners.



Woman Log Calendar by Android. This app is free and gets a 4.5 out of 5 stars. It does not include as much as the Woman Calendar, but it does track your periods, basal temperature and most fertile days on an easy to use calendar.

Lily and Ovulator are cheap and easy to use and are both cheaper than the Woman Calendar. The ovulation app Menstrual calendar is free. While these three are not as fancy as some of the other choices, they get the job done and can help to track your own cycle, rather than you having to depend on “averages” and “norms”.

When it comes to exercise, more is better.

False -Are you a marathon runner? A Triathlete? Do your friends tease you about your exercise obsession? If so, it is probably time to trade your running shoes for cross-trainers and add some more moderate exercises into your routine. Just as a low body mass index (BMI) can inhibit a woman’s ability to conceive (please see Number 5) , a recent U.S. and Danish study has indicated that over-exercising is a problem too. You may have noticed this if you are a runner, or high-performance athlete, in the form of skipped or very light periods.



Even with a healthy body mass index, over exercising can prevent you from conceiving. Women with a normal weight who participated in “vigorous physical activities”, including running, fast cycling, swimming, and gymnastics, for five hours a week or more, had problems conceiving. However, obese women who participated in these same types of activities were not as adversely effected because, according to Dr. Dimitrios Mastrogionnis, “ Obesity is a different ballgame. Different hormones are playing around in obesity -- fatty tissue produces more female hormones, more estrogens. Other hormones are transformed into female hormones in the adipose tissue.”

Ideally, unless they have been instructed otherwise by a medical professional, women who are trying to conceive should exercise moderately, for about 30-minutes per day, in order to protect their chances of conceiving. Moderate exercise includes brisk walking, leisurely cycling, gardening, moderate water exercises, or any classes tailored specifically for pre- and post-natal women.

I should skip the cola and ease up on my caffeine intake.

True - Those Danes seem to be fond of fertility analysis. Remember, they were the ones who paired up with U.S. researchers to analyze the effects of vigorous exercise? They also did a study on whether or not caffeine and/or cola intake affects fertility. They evaluated more than 2,554 young Danish men who had been recruited to determine whether or not they were fit for the military. The men were required to submit semen samples and fill out a questionnaire regarding their daily caffeine and/or caffeinated cola intake.

The men were divided by low, moderate, and high daily caffeine and cola consumption. High cola (which was considered to be 14 or more 16 oz. colas per week) resulted in reduced sperm concentration and total sperm count. Although high caffeine consumption resulted in lower sperm concentration and counts, it was not nearly as significant as it was for those who consumed large amounts of cola.

So as long as you are reducing your own caffeine intake, it might be worth it to convince your man that it is time for him to jump on the No Caffeine wagon with you. And hey, less colas means a healthier lifestyle anyway, right?

There is no added benefit to organic food when trying to concieve.

False -What many people are not aware of, unless they are on a quest to become pregnant, is that the World Health Organization has actually lowered the “average male sperm count”. This is because in general, male sperm counts are lower than they were fifty years ago. Most scientists and medical researchers are convinced that there are environmental factors at work. One of the most likely suspects: pesticides.

For example, HPTE is a widely used pesticide that has been shown to stop testosterone production for after 17 hours after exposure. You can do the math, but if you eat fruits and veggies sprayed with this pesticide on a daily basis, sperm production is going to be much more challenging in your household. While washing fruits and vegetables can help to remove surface chemicals, multiple studies show that most pesticides penetrate the skin and are found in the edible insides.



Try to shop locally for fruits and vegetables that are grown without the use of chemicals or pesticides. Organic politics are getting complex, so speaking with farmers at Farmer's Markets is the best way to protect yourself. There are many small farmers that use organic practices but don't pay the hefty fees to boast an organic label, while there are many Big Organic Label products that might not be as "organic" as you think. Can't get pesticide-free, local produce? Shopping for products with an organic label is the next best thing you can do to keep those sperm growing and thriving.

A metabolite of methoxychlor, 2,2-bis(p-hydroxyphenyl)-1,1, 1-trichloroethane, reduces testosterone biosynthesis

Men also have biological clocks.

True - Women are often the ones who are confronted with Biological Clock Syndrome. However, men have biological clocks as well. The researchers at England's Bristol and Brunel University have found that the older a male is, the longer it takes his partner to conceive, regardless of his partner's age. If you are a woman who hears her biological clock perpetually ticking away in the background, it might be time to pass it to your mate, if he is 35-years old or more.

While only about 8% of men 25-years and younger fail to conceive a child with their mate within the first six months of trying, that percentage goes up to 15% by age 35, and continues to rise from there. This study was done involving 8,000 couples. What the researchers are not so sure about is why. It could be that testicular changes and aging decrease sperm quality, or it could also be that older males have sex less frequently. Either way, women aren't the only ones who have to be responsible for that irritating biological clock anymore.

The older a male is, the longer it takes his partner to conceive, regardless of his partner's age.

A (baby) Aspirin a day might keep fertility treatments at bay.

True -An aspirin a day is a common treatment for people with heart and other medical conditions due to its anti-coagulant and anti-inflammatory properties. However, because of these beneficial properties, it seems to have an effect in improving uterine blood flow, which can decrease the chances of miscarriages for women who have been diagnosed with Antiphospholipid Syndrome (APS). This is a condition where an autoimmune response causes blood clots to form in the uterus and causes miscarriages. In the studies where Aspirin has been effective, it has been used in combination with heparin. It is important to note that the Aspirin used in studies and trials is usually 100 mg doses, common to baby Aspirin, rather than the 300 mg doses that are common in traditional Aspirin bottles.

While the verdict is still out, due to conflicting research results, several university campuses and fertility specialists are conducting trials to analyze whether or not low-doses of Aspirin can help aid conception, and help to increase uterine flow, for women who are trying to conceive, as well as those who are undergoing IVF treatments. You should always talk to your doctor before taking a low-dose of Aspirin. It will be interesting to see how the results of current trials line up.

Aspirin studied as aid to conception, healthy pregnancy

Study looks at low dose aspirin and its effect on pregnancy in women who had pregnancy loss

Whole milk products are better for my fertility.

True -You may remember how difficult it was when you made the switch from whole milk to low- or non-fat milk. All that creamy deliciousness just tasted so watered down. But what could you do? It was considered healthier, right? It turns out, that low- and non-fat milk products are not as healthy for women who are trying to get pregnant.

Harvard researchers found that ovulation-related fertility problems are as high as 85% more likely in women who consume two or more low-fat dairy servings per day. Yikes! How many non-fat yogurts did you eat this week? Women who consume whole fat dairy products are 50% less likely to experience issues pertaining to ovulation. Researchers already thought that dairy and lactose intake might be related to female fertility issues, and specifically to those issues related to ovulation. But after reviewing the statistics of 18,555 women, it was determined that ovulation issues seemed more related to the fat content in dairy, more than any other factor.

If this is hard for you to swallow, consider this: once you do conceive your baby, whole milk products will be much more prevalent around your house. So, now is as good a time as any to ditch the skinny decaf lattes and up the ante to whole milk.

A prospective study of dairy foods intake and anovulatory infertility

Working the night shift has a negative affect on fertility.

True -If you work a night or swing shift, and you are struggling to get pregnant, you may want to talk to your manager about switching shifts for a while. Human beings have long been in tune with the natural rhythms of the planet. We awaken with the sun each morning, and head to sleep when it sets at night. At least, that's how it was for Millenia – until the advent of electricity. Once electric lights were a possibility, businesses and corporations began capitalizing on it by keeping their workers scheduled around the clock. Unfortunately, it seems as if the female human body is not acclimating as well as we might have thought.

The results of studies done on mice at Northwestern University show that a natural circadian rhythm is almost mandatory for female mice to experience a successful conception and birth. Mice were divided into three groups. The group who maintained a relatively normal rhythm – 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. – has successful pregnancies 90% of the time. The second group, who had a slightly disrupted daylight/dark schedule experienced 50% pregnancy success. However, the third group, placed on the equivalent of a night shift with daylight in the reverse, only had successful pregnancies 22% of the time.

Further research will have to be done to determine how sensitive the female human is to disrupted sleep patterns. But it is worth considering if you are sleep deprived, or have a job which requires you to work late nights, or all night. You may want to get back to a normal schedule while you and your partner are trying to conceive.

Choosing boxers over briefs for your man is better for his fertility.

False - Every man who prefers briefs has watched as his partner chucks them in the bin and replaces them with boxers. With all the information regarding high temperatures and sperm production, tightie-whities got a bad rap. However, the results from numerous studies have shown that tight briefs may not have the negative effects on sperm that we all thought.



The idea is that any elevation in scrotum temperature can result in low sperm count. The problem is, nobody can prove this fact. In fact, most of the mainstream fertility studies done to prove this fact have either been completely inconclusive, or have said that briefs do not elevate the temperature of the scrotum any more than boxers do. Even slight temperature variations on the external scrotum do not mean that the deep testicular temperatures have been elevated.

So, if it makes you feel better to ditch the briefs, and don the boxers, while you are trying to get pregnant, so be it. But, most likely, it is not going to make a huge difference one way or the other. The sperm count is only adversely affected when temperatures rise significantly beyond the norm for extended periods of time. The most important thing is that the male half of the partnership is comfortable and happy, so that he can do his job when the time is right.

Are boxer shorts really better? A critical analysis of the role of underwear type in male subfertility.

Deep scrotal temperature and the effect on it of clothing, air temperature, activity, posture and paraplegia.

Men should minimize their soy intake.

True - Did you know that peri-menopausal and menopausal women often look for estrogen-rich foods to help quell their side effects and symptoms? Avocados, yams, and soy are all examples of foods that have natural estrogen compounds. It turns out that when men eat higher than normal levels of soy products, which is common for men who are vegetarian and vegan, the plant-based estrogens they ingest may actually have an adverse effect on testosterone production and sperm count.

As with many of these studies, the researchers are very clear in pointing out that the findings are still preliminary. However, there are multiple studies that have been able to correlate males who consume higher than average amounts of soy products with lower sperm counts: higher than average was marked at a half a serving a day, per day on average. Many of the males who had lower sperm counts were eating as much as four servings of soy products per day.

Another interesting fact is that men who were considered over-weight, or obese, and also consumed higher amounts of soy products seemed to have the lowest sperm counts, on average. Soy has been shown to lower the sperm counts and cause fertility problems in male rats and monkeys as well.

Does this mean males should eliminate all soy products from their diet? Probably not. But it might make men reconsider how much soy they are consuming while trying to conceive, especially if they are overweight or obese.

Soya products linked to low sperm count

There's never been a better time to lose weight.

True - Now that we have discussed the link between soy, obesity, and low sperm counts. Let's talk about obesity. It matters. Being overweight, or obese, can affect male and female fertility. If you are the female-half of the equation, you have double the reason to lose weight because once you do conceive, your pregnancy risks go up exponentially if you are overweight. So why does weight matter so much anyway?



Good question. Researchers want to know too. However, some of the factors could relate to topics we have already discussed, i.e. if you are an overweight male who drinks cola, eats predominantly soy products and sits in a hot tub every night. However, there are other factors at work, most likely hormonal. Most studies indicate it has to do with the body's ability to process insulin. One of the most recent, accidental, discoveries occurred in obese mice. It turns out that when the female mice become obese, and their insulin levels rise, the insulin receptors on the pituitary gland register the increase and end up producing too much fertility-regulating luteinizing hormone, which renders them infertile. Female mice who had their insulin receptors removed from their pituitary gland could reproduce normally.

While this hormone is usually found in lesser concentration in obese women, scientists still feel it indicates an insulin/fertility hormone relationship that has yet to be identified.

Another interesting study, this one out of the Yale School of Medicine, has found a correlation between women who are obese while pregnant, producing daughters who suffer from infertility issues. They believe that an absence of the hormone ghrelin in-utero, can cause fertility issues later on. This is one more reason to monitor your weight as a parent; you never know what type of genetic legacy you may be passing on to your offspring.

[Study Clarifies Obesity-Infertility Link](#)
Study links obesity, infertility

Sperm love pomegranate juice.

True - Pomegranates have long been a symbol of female fertility, what with their red, rotund, and excessively seed-laden lusciousness. However, it turns out that pomegranates may have a very real relationship with male fertility. In a recent study on the effects of pomegranate juice on the sperm of male rats, not only did pomegranate juice increase sperm concentration levels, it also improved the sperm's ability to move, and decreased the number of defective, or abnormal sperm present. In other words, pomegranate juice is a triple-whammy when it comes to sperm health.



Researchers divided rats into four different groups. The control group consumed only water, while the other three groups consumed water mixed with different concentrations of Pomegranate juice.

While there are multiple chemicals, vitamins and nutrients at work here, it's interesting to note that levels of Vitamin C, or ascorbic acid, levels were increased in the semen of the pomegranate infused rats. It is common knowledge (at least in the reproductive technology circles) that men with low sperm counts often have low levels of ascorbic acid in their semen, and that low ascorbic acid levels can be also markers for sperm with damaged DNA. So perhaps drinking pomegranate juice, and popping a Vitamin C supplement, can help to boost, and energize, those sperm so they can find their desired target more efficiently.

[Drinking pomegranate juice may improve male fertility](#)

[Effects of pomegranate juice consumption on sperm quality](#)

[Relationship between seminal ascorbic acid and sperm DNA integrity in infertile men.](#)

[Ascorbic Acid in Human Seminal Plasma](#)

[As cliché as it sounds, you really DO need to watch what you eat!](#)

True - There are many diets and weight loss remedies available. It is recommended that you select one that provides an overall balanced diet geared towards a lifetime dietary change that is sustainable. Many of today's 'fad' diets are structured towards a specific food or weight reduction strategy that can leave the body deprived of nutrients, minerals or proteins if followed for long periods of time. One might realize some rapid initial weight loss from a fad diet that is not composed of balanced food groups but the weight soon returns. Your best strategy is not to diet at all but eat well balanced meals for the rest of your life.

According to the author of 'If At First You Don't Conceive', William Schoolcraft, MD, there are many misconceptions about supplements and food and whether they enhance fertility. Dr. Schoolcraft recommends a healthy, well-balanced diet to promote better general health but does not think it likely to enhance fertility itself. Dr. Schoolcraft does recommend special dietary and nutritional supplementation for some conditions such as: Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), endometriosis and immunologic issues. If you're interested in a full overview of his recommendations, you can find a copy of "If at First you Don't Conceive" through the following link:

- [If at First You Don't Conceive: A Complete Guide to Infertility from One of the Nation's Leading Clinics](#)

Being on the pill can hurt your chances for conceiving.

False - Birth control pills are often used to regulate menstrual periods, relieve heavy bleeding in addition to providing contraception. Once the pill is discontinued, most women's menstrual periods will resume as normal within a month or two. Being on the pill may have masked fertility issues but has not been linked to causing them.



There is hope for fertility after cancer.

True - For many young men and women or children, receiving the diagnosis of cancer is devastating. The news is often so unexpected and sudden that thinking about how treatment will affect one's future fertility is the farthest from one's mind. However, if fertility preservation is a concern, there are several fertility preservation options that you can discuss with your oncologist and/or your reproductive endocrinologist before the cancer treatment commences. Some of the preservation treatments must occur prior to chemotherapy or radiation beginning.



Options for women include egg retrieval and cryopreservation, embryo cryopreservation, use of donor egg or embryos, surrogacy, ovarian transposition (a laparoscopic procedure to temporarily reposition the ovaries above the radiation zone) and adoption. For men there are also a number of choices ranging from sperm banking, radiation shielding to donor sperm. The good thing to know is that there are a multitude of possibilities available to address fertility issues—whether it's before cancer treatment or after.

Alternative medicine can improve fertility.

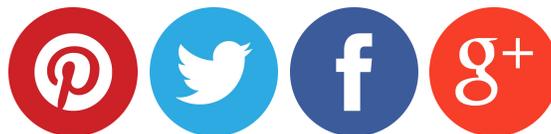
True - According to Eastern medicine, when we create an environment of balance, life manifests on its own. Also referred to as complementary medicine, the use of acupuncture, Chinese herbal medicine, yoga, massage, hypnotherapy, chiropractic, and Reiki are becoming increasingly popular as an adjunct to modern Western forms of allopathic infertility treatment. IVF centers across the U.S. not only recommend patients use some form of alternative medicine to complement their fertility care, many IVF centers make access to such treatment available right at their office.

Depending on the venue one selects, alternative forms of Eastern medicine aid in improving one's general health, including that of the reproductive system or by reducing stress and anxiety. An added perk is that it feels really good.

A massage anyone? It's just what the doctor ordered.



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