



Hot baths and tight underwear

Your testes work best in cooler conditions, which is why they are located outside the body. On average the testicular temperature is 2-3 degrees lower than the core body temperature. Any situation that causes increased temperature around the testes will damage sperm production and quality. Examples are:

- Jobs which involve sitting down for long periods, such as taxi or lorry driving and some desk jobs
- Working in hot environments, such as kitchens and factories
- Hot baths and saunas. Have showers instead
- Wearing tight underwear or jeans/trousers. Try wearing loose-fitting cotton boxer shorts



Herts & Essex
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Male
Fit for Fertility

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Male Fertility

An alarming number of men are completely unaware of the different causes of male fertility problems. Of those who do have a basic understanding, many are unwilling to find out more.

Male fertility is not something to feel worried or ashamed about. It really isn't rocket science, and if you understand the key do's and don'ts, and what to embrace and what to avoid, you can give yourself and your partner a much better chance of conceiving.



Male infertility is caused by abnormal semen, and is normally because of one of the following:

- Low sperm count – producing too few sperm, or in some cases, none at all
- Low sperm motility/progression – motility is a measure of the percentage of sperm that are moving in a specimen. Progression is a measure of how fast the sperm move. Both have an impact on your sperm's ability to fertilise an egg
- Abnormal sperm shape – the sperm produced are physically abnormal and are generally sluggish and highly unlikely to fertilise your partner's eggs

The definitive cause of low sperm count and poor sperm quality is largely unknown. Some known contributory factors include lifestyle, injury to the testicles such as that sustained during sporting activities, radiotherapy or chemotherapy as part of cancer treatment, contracting mumps in adult life, certain medications and sexually transmitted diseases.

Diet

Diet is one area of general health and wellbeing that everyone could improve upon in some way. When it comes to conceiving, eating healthy meals at regular intervals can have just as much of a positive impact as any dietary supplements or pregnancy aids on the market.

Aim for a diet rich in the following:

- Fresh fruit and vegetables
- Complex carbs, found in sweet potatoes, brown rice and wholegrain bread, pasta and cereals
- Fresh meat and fish
- Pulses, beans and nuts
- Low fat dairy products, such as skimmed milk, cottage cheese and low fat yoghurt

Avoid fatty convenience foods and sugary snacks wherever possible, although a little in moderation is better than a weekly binge.

Exercise

Men should be mindful of the kind of exercise they are taking when trying to conceive. The misconception that 'any exercise is good exercise' doesn't apply to fertility fitness, and some endurance disciplines – such as long-distance cycling and marathon running – can actually have a detrimental effect on sperm production.

A moderate amount of aerobic exercise is advisable – enough to build up a sweat and shift some unwanted weight if it exists – but not enough to push you into the cardio training zone, which leads to fatigue and requires a greater amount of recovery time.

Lifestyle

Stress, fatigue and depression are three of the biggest physical and mental factors that men have to overcome when trying to conceive. Problems at work, money worries and self-confidence issues can affect male libido and sperm production.

If you are feeling overly stressed, tired, upset or self-conscious, speak to one of our consultants in complete confidence.

Alcohol

We all enjoy a pint every now and then, and as long as you keep it to one or two pints when trying to conceive, you should be okay. Ideally, you should drink no more than 4 units a week (two pints of lager) for top sperm performance.

Smoking

As well as numerous dangerous and life-threatening side-effects for your health, smoking significantly damages the quality of sperm produced in the testes. Both sperm count and sperm motility are damaged by the toxins in the smoke produced by tobacco products.

Supplements

You pump iron a few times a week, can lift your own bodyweight and look like Gerard Butler in *300*. Of course you aren't going to have a problem getting pregnant – your sperm is as strong as you are.

WRONG.

Studies show that strength and muscle mass have no positive impact on the production and quality of sperm, and that bodybuilding supplements can have a serious detrimental effect on your ability to produce good quality sperm. Anabolic steroids and testosterone present in many muscle-building products and supplements will reduce your sperm to zero. Just as oestrogen in contraceptive pills completely stops egg production in women, anabolic steroids and testosterone will totally stop sperm production.

Drugs

Statistically, men are more likely to take illegal drugs than women of the same age. Studies show that around half of all young adult males in the UK have tried marijuana, and that men are three times more likely to be frequent drug users than women. Surprisingly, many men do not realise how harmful those drugs are to their fertility.

Sperm take up to 10 weeks to fully develop, so if you have taken any illicit substances during that time, your sperm will be affected.