

**THE NATUROPATHIC
PERSPECTIVE
BY SHELBY WORTS, BSc, ND**

FERTILITY part ii

Female Fertility

A current trend is for a woman to become pregnant later in life than in recent decades. Greater time spent acquiring an education, traveling the world, building a job/business that she loves and beginning a life with a partner are some of the various contributing factors. By the time many women are ready to prepare for a family they are in their 30's, or beyond, and may be surprised that they do not conceive immediately. While it may be true that a female's eggs become less responsive to hormonal stimulation beyond her mid-30's there is still much that can be done to support her natural fertility. Indeed, many positive changes can occur merely with our daily lifestyle choices; in example, coffee consumption and cigarette smoking are 2 of the most common, and strongest, dose-dependent agents working against a woman's fertility.

Factors that negatively impact your fertility include:

- poor eating habits: malnutrition can interfere with the likelihood of fertilization and subsequent implantation of your eggs in your uterus
- caffeinated beverages: more than 3cups/day can lead to a 176% increased risk of not conceiving
- cigarettes: foremost reproductive poison of the 21st century
- alcoholic beverages • recreational drugs
- stress and other repressed emotions
- medications: antidepressants; non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS), such as aspirin and ibuprofen, may delay the necessary rupture of the ovarian follicle; antihistamines may dry-out cervical mucus; long-term birth-control pill use can lead to deficiencies of important minerals and vitamins including folic acid
- sexually-transmitted disease: past or present
- x-rays: always ask for a groin shield when having any (other than pelvic) radiology performed

What you can do to support your own fertility:

- avoid excessive estrogen exposure: limit your intake of non-organic dairy and meat products; do not microwave plastic containers; reduce extreme body fat
- regular exercise: ≥20min. 3x weekly; be sure to replace lost electrolytes (via liquid supplement or diluted fruit/veggie juices)

- eat 3-5 nutrient-dense meals each day; choose whole, unprocessed foods
- avoid artificial sweeteners
- consult your naturopathic doctor for a complete health, and hormonal if indicated, evaluation
- monitor your ovulatory function each month; *see below*

Monitoring your Ovulatory Function:

- chart your menstrual cycle: become visually aware of your cycle length including any fluctuations; in a regular 28-day cycle ovulation occurs ~day 14... later in a longer cycle
- record your temperature each morning: at ovulation your temperature may increase ~1° and remain elevated until menses resumes
- cervical mucus changes throughout your cycle: ‘fertile’ mucus at ovulation is clear, slippery and can be stretched between 2 fingers
- touch your cervix with a clean finger: it should feel softer at ovulation

A Naturopathic Doctor can help by:

- conducting a detailed investigation in to your medical and lifestyle history; looking for the cause of your concern(s)
- building a treatment protocol specifically tailored to your individual requirements; may include dietary & nutritional changes as well as acupuncture, hydrotherapy and varieties of detoxification
- hearing and discussing your thoughts, feelings and anxieties pertaining to your fertility and imminent pregnancy

If you suspect that you may have an issue with your fertility please discuss this with your medical or naturopathic doctor to ensure that a proper work-up is conducted; this may include a hormone evaluation, if indicated.

Did you know? When you conceive a little girl, her ovarian follicles have developed by the 16th week of gestation. Therefore, your health at time of conception and subsequent pregnancy can have a direct impact on the health of your grandchildren!

Shelby Worts, ND can be reached at:

705-444-8300

209-186 Erie St., Collingwood

info@shelbywortsnd.com