

**THE NATUROPATHIC
PERSPECTIVE
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FERTILITY

Challenges with fertility are on the rise. Studies indicate that up to 1-in-8 couples are finding themselves unable to conceive after 1 year of unprotected intercourse. Contributing factors are multifactorial and may include environmental exposures, nutritional deficiencies, chronic stress, etc. Finding yourself in the taxing position of not becoming pregnant when you desire to does not necessarily indicate a need for medication or radical intervention but, rather, a thorough investigation in to your medical and lifestyle histories.

Fertility is an issue that impacts two people... both individuals need to be recognized individually as well as part of the team that they are. Consequently, I will be addressing this issue as such... this month I will discuss fertility of the male... and next month fertility of the female as well as the couple.

Male Fertility

Sperm quality has markedly decreased over the past 50 years. Our environment has created more demands upon our detoxification processes, our foods have, overall, become more nutrient deficient and chronic stress has seemingly pervaded most people's lives. Creating an internal environment that is supportive of sperm production (spermatogenesis) and maturation is essential for healthy fertility as well as fetal development. Spermatogenesis is an energetically demanding process that requires optimal intake of **antioxidants**, **minerals** and other **nutrients**. Interestingly, only ~10% of male ejaculate is sperm. The remaining 80-90% is a combination of nourishing and protecting fluids for the sperm themselves; including fructose, lipids, amino acids, vitamins B&C, zinc and electrolytes. These factors are all required for sperm production and survival.

Factors that negatively influence sperm formation include:

- testicular temperature above 32°C; tight pants, baths & hot tubs, strenuous activity, working on a laptop compute that is on your lap, etc.
- x-rays; always ask for a groin shield when having any ((other than pelvic)) radiology performed.
- other ionizing radiation
- alcoholism
- malnutrition
- cadmium salts
- some drugs

What you can do to support your own fertility:

- nutrition: eat a diet rich in dark green and colourful vegetables, high-fibre fruits, good oils ((ie. olive, flax)), whole, unprocessed foods and high-quality proteins
- food quality: select organically-grown/-raised products when available, including meats and dairy products.
- incorporate a mode of ‘stress management’ in to your daily life; ie. yoga, meditation, etc.

Supplements that may be beneficial:

- antioxidants: a full-spectrum formula which includes vitamins A,C,E as well as the minerals Selenium and Zinc
- multi-vitamin/-mineral: high-quality formula free of dairy, sugar, wheat, corn or yeast
- flaxseed oil: used daily on salads, grains, cereals, etc. *Do not heat*

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
- creating and guiding you through a cleansing diet which may include appropriate botanical ((herbal)) or other remedies to reduce the amount of stored toxins in your tissues and to improve your detoxification processes for the future. It is imperative that any ‘cleansing’ or ‘detox’ program is not being done while actively trying to conceive.
- performing acupuncture which can have a very positive impact on fertility

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?! The time frame for complete sperm production and maturation is **12 weeks!**... it is consequently very important that conception is a conscious decision which you prepare for to support a healthy pregnancy and a strong, vital new being.

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