



Improving Fertility Through Lifestyle

Fertility is a complex process, and some barriers are out of your control. However, listed below are several diet and lifestyle changes that CAN improve your chances of getting pregnant.

Achieve and maintain a healthy weight

Both overweight and underweight women may have decreased fertility, usually related to overproduction or underproduction of hormones that regulate ovulation. If you would like to lose weight, keep in mind that this is not the time to try an overly restrictive diet. This type of diet could compromise your nutritional status, putting yourself or your baby at risk. Instead, focus on improving the quality of your diet, and gradually increasing physical activity. If you do become pregnant, a healthy diet and physical activity are still important, but further weight loss is NOT recommended.

Avoid excessive exercise

While regular physical activity can improve health and relieve stress, more is not always better. Too much exercise can decrease body fat too much, which can result in ovulation stopping, or occurring less frequently.

Get enough nutrients

It has been suggested that certain vitamins and antioxidants may help with fertility, but more research needs to be done. Simply eating a nutritious, well-balanced diet and starting a prenatal vitamin can help correct deficiencies, as well as provide important nutrients needed in greater amounts in early pregnancy.

Avoid excessive alcohol

Research has produced conflicting results, but most experts recommend limiting alcohol to one drink per day or less for optimal fertility. No amount of alcohol is considered safe during pregnancy, so total avoidance is important if you think you may be pregnant.

Stop smoking

We all know smoking is hazardous to our general health and well-being, but it can also damage eggs and ovaries, resulting in decreased fertility.

Avoid excessive caffeine

While several studies have produced mixed results, some indicate that high intakes of caffeine (over 300mg per day, or 2-4 cups of brewed coffee) can delay pregnancy for some women.

Don't ignore your partner's health

Male fertility also suffers from excess weight, poor diet, stress, smoking, and heavy alcohol intake. This is a good time for your significant other to take a multivitamin and improve some of his lifestyle choices, too.