



Boosting fertility

Words: Kate Arnold

Infertility is usually defined as the failure to conceive after a year or more of regular sexual activity during the time of ovulation. It also refers to the inability to carry a pregnancy to term. At present in the UK one in six couples are infertile. The statistics for fertility are not that good added to the fact that the quantity and quality of your eggs decline with age. Women in their early 20's are about twice as likely to get pregnant as women in their late 30's.

For men, infertility is most often the result of a low sperm count or an anatomical abnormality. A variety of factors can result in a low sperm count including; alcohol consumption, endocrine disorders, exposure to toxins, radiation, excessive heat, fever, or testicular injury. For women the most common causes are ovulatory failure, blocked fallopian tubes, endometriosis or fibroids and some women can develop antibodies to their partners sperm.

If you want to become pregnant there are a number of tests available over the counter that can help you determine the best time to attempt to conceive. These tests predict the time of ovulation by detecting the release of LH, luteinizing hormone, which in turn triggers the release of the egg.

There is increasing evidence that before even thinking about a baby you and your partner may need to change your diet and lifestyle to allow healthy sperm to grow in a healthy body. I have devised below some tips and advice for both men and women to follow as part of pre conceptual care plan. If possible this should be started at least three months before trying to conceive.

For Women

- ~ Stop smoking, drinking alcohol and coffee.
- ~ Take a good multivitamin with folic acid before, during and after pregnancy - try Lamberts Strongstart.
- ~ Eat little and often to balance your blood sugar levels throughout the day.
- ~ Address any stress and try to learn to relax- this is very important!
- ~ Check for chlamydia and any other sexually transmitted diseases.
- ~ Come off the contraceptive pill at least three months before trying to conceive.

Vitamins and minerals needed

Zinc and vitamin B6 work in every part of the female sexual cycle, and help produce adequate levels of sex hormones. They also increase the desire for sex! Zinc can be found naturally in oysters, lamb, nuts, egg yolks, rye and oats. Vitamin B6 can be found naturally in cauliflower, watercress, bananas, broccoli, muesli, sunflower seeds and lentils. You need approximately 15mg zinc and 60mg vitamin B6 daily. If you don't feel you are getting it in your diet, I would suggest a supplement.

Omega 3 is important for healthy hormone functioning, so have a portion of oily fish 2 to 3 times per week.

Help combat free radicals by taking antioxidants, these are vitamins A, C and E.

Vitamin A is found in carrots, sweet potatoes, dried apricots, squash and watercress (vitamin A cannot to be taken during pregnancy).

Vitamin C is found in vegetables, peppers, kiwi fruit, tomatoes, citrus fruits and berries.

Vitamin E can be found in- nuts, seeds, oily fish, avocados, beans and sweet potatoes.

Selenium is found in - brazil nuts, sesame seeds, tuna, cabbage and whole grains

Essential Fatty Acids (Omega 3 and Omega 6) are found in hemp, flax, soybeans, walnuts, seaweed, sunflower seeds, sesame seeds, almonds, evening primrose oil, free range eggs

Kate runs a tailored weight loss clinic on Mondays at 30 Lushington Road, Eastbourne. For more information please call her on 01323 737814/ 722499.