

## **Recommendations for Promoting Female Fertility**

*By applying the lifestyle principles of Chinese medicine you can optimize your fertility.*

**SLEEP AND REST** – sufficient and regular sleep is extremely important for overall health and, according to Chinese medicine, the health of the Kidney energy, which is key for fertility. Eliminating artificial night lighting from sleeping quarters can contribute to improvement in irregular menstruation, mucus patterns and fertility. Lighting from hall lights, digital clocks, street lights and so on affect the pineal gland which is responsible for several hormones related to reproduction.

**STRESS** can negatively impact female fertility. It is important to incorporate ways of de-stressing: simplify as much as possible, leave out unnecessary stressors, and include relaxing activities.

**EXERCISE** – is a useful strategy for de-stressing, moving the energy (Qi) and disengaging the mind. Massage or Thai bodywork can do the same. Meditation is an effective means to prevent Qi stagnation (over stressed). Qi Gong and Tai Qi are moving meditations that are especially effective. Here I am suggesting gentle exercise, not excessive training.

**ACUPUNCTURE** – points will be chosen according to what your body needs. Acupuncture can strengthen your Qi and release unnecessary tension. The result is better health and fertility.

**CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINE** – an herbal formula can be customized specifically for your needs to optimize your fertility.

**WEIGHT**– overweight women can have difficulty conceiving. Sometimes this is due to polycystic ovary syndrome, which in Chinese medicine is related to a Phlegm-damp condition which causes weight gain because the body's metabolism is hampered by the congestion of stagnant fluids. Exercise such as regular walking and the reduction of damp forming foods such as sugar, dairy and white flour products are essential. Acupuncture and Chinese herbs are strongly recommended, as is joining a weight loss program.

On the other hand, weight loss of even 10% can cause ovulatory problems and reduced fertility. More extreme weight loss can inhibit ovulation altogether. Women with low body weight as a result of athletic training can stop ovulating until their exercise regimen is reduced and their body fat builds up again. The body knows that it cannot support the caloric requirements of pregnancy and breastfeeding if it doesn't have enough fat stores. Acupuncture and Chinese herbs can help women who have a hard time gaining weight.

### **DIET**

Keep hydrated by drinking sufficient water (without sugar, caffeine, carbonation or salt, however, lemon, lime or electrolytes are good to add)

Eat organic food – organic meat, fruits, vegetables, oils, dairy and grains are available at natural grocery stores as well as at most regular supermarkets.

Strict vegan diets are not advocated. Meat is important because it strengthens the Qi and Blood – eat regularly in small quantities because large quantities can create Qi stagnation. The bulk of your diet should come from organic plant sources, especially green leafy vegetables. An alkaline environment promotes sperm survival, conception and implantation. Vegetables and fruits are alkaline while meat, dairy and most grains are acidic, so it is important to eat lots of vegetables and fruits while eating small portions of meat regularly.

**Foods to limit or avoid:**

sugars, fruit juices, soft drinks  
processed, bleached white flour products and prepackaged foods  
fatty meats (bacon, sausage, hot dogs, lunch meats, ham)  
shortening, margarine  
processed peanut butter  
artificial food additives, especially Aspartame  
processed cheese  
excessive salt (uniodized salt)  
aluminum-containing baking powder  
excessive dairy product  
excessive coffee, chocolate, caffeine-containing tea

Avoid cold foods and drinks and limit raw foods

Avoid eating old left-overs

**SUPPLEMENTS**

A good quality food source multi-vitamin is recommended and may need to be supplemented with some (not all) of the following for specific needs.

Vitamin A: 6000-10,000 IU

Beta-carotene: 10,000 – 15,000 IU

Vitamin D: 400 – 600 IU

Vitamin C: 1000 mg

Vitamin E: 400 – 800 IU \*

Thiamine (B1): 50 mg

Riboflavin (B2): 30 mg

Niacin (B3): 100 mg

Pantothenic acid (B5): 250 mg

Pyridoxine (B6): 100 mg (helps balance estrogen and progesterone)

Cobalamin (B12): 200 mcg

Folic acid: 800 – 2000 mcg \*\*

Calcium: 1200 – 1600 mg

Iron: 40 – 80 mg\*\*\*

Magnesium: 450 – 1000 mg

Manganese: 2.5 – 15 mg

Selenium: 150 – 300 mcg

Zinc: 20 – 60 mg

\*Natural forms of vitamin E: d-alpha-tocopherol, rrr-alpha-tocopherol, d-alpha-tocopherol acetate, or d-alpha-tocopherol succinate. Synthetic form: dl-alpha-tocopherol or all-rac alpha-tocopherol.

\*\*Folic acid is extremely important for cellular division and to prevent neural tube defect; take for months before conception and throughout your pregnancy.

\*\*\*floradix liquid is a highly recommended iron supplement

**note:** Iron supplements should not be taken together with calcium, zinc or vitamin E if in the form of ferrous sulfate. Organic iron (ferrous gluconate and ferrous fumarate) leaves vit E intact.

**Additional supplements** (may depend on your constitution):

Essential fatty acids found in fish, fish oil, krill oil, and flax seed oil are key at and leading up to ovulation.

Bee pollen with royal jelly (regenerative and tonifying; this is a nutritive tonic that may be considered the queen bee equivalent of fertility drugs!)

Blue-green algae (nourishes the endocrine, nervous and immune systems; regulates and repairs tissue)

Wheatgrass (enhances immunity and restores hormonal functioning)

Coenzyme Q-10 (assists mitochondrial function, the powerhouse of each cell)

#### OUR DAILY DRUGS

Caffeine – reduce coffee and other caffeinated beverage intake or switch to tea, which has less caffeine than coffee, especially if you are having trouble conceiving. Coffee constricts vessels while tea opens them. Tea, especially green tea, has the added benefit of being an anti-oxidant. That said, don't overdo tea.

Alcohol – any alcohol consumption during IVF cycles reduces the chance of success by 50%. Excessive alcohol intake can throw off estrogen levels.

Cigarette smoking – nicotine ages the ovaries and makes the eggs resistant to fertilization.

Marijuana – the THC in marijuana is toxic to the developing egg and at certain levels can delay ovulation.

Medical drugs and over-the-counter medications, even NSAIDs such as ibuprofen – can impair fertility, specifically inhibiting ovulation.

#### TOXINS - CHEMICALS

Our eggs are extremely sensitive: to chemicals in the environment and in foods can affect fertility, conception, fetal development and miscarriage.

Avoid the following:

- Industrial chemicals and fumes (paint fumes, gasoline, ammonia, nail polish remover, pesticides, printing inks, adhesives, dry cleaning liquid).

- Heavy metals: mercury in fish (especially tuna and shark) and leaking dental amalgams, lead, aluminum and cadmium (used in the manufacturing process of plastics, pesticides and cigarettes among other things).
- Plastics – phthalates and other chemicals found in plastics are implicated in the reduction of fertility. Use plastic wraps and other plastic products minimally.
- Pesticides, antibiotics and hormones found in foods that are not organic.
- Aspartame and other artificial sweeteners – converted to toxic substances in the body.