



5 Ways to Naturally Boost Your Fertility

Every person's ability to conceive is unique to him or her. One woman may become pregnant while using oral contraceptives, whereas another may struggle for years with infertility. While some elements of fertility are inevitably genetic, many, if not most are environmental and can therefore be controlled or modified.

"I see many people in our practice who were late in realizing that they may have many treatment opportunities to naturally increase their fertility odds," says Dr. Abraham Munabi, M.D., medical director and founder, Reproductive Science Institute of Suburban Philadelphia, P.C., Chesterbrook. "When they discover they are having fertility issues, they simply assume that it's beyond their power to do anything to naturally change their odds of conception. However, there are a number of proactive measures they can take to improve their chances of conceiving either naturally or with a fertility specialist's assistance."

Below are five immediately-implementable ways to naturally boost male and female fertility. When used in conjunction, they can truly make a huge difference. Even if an individual is currently undergoing fertility treatments or is under the care of a reproductive science specialist, these five fertility-enhancing techniques can be extremely beneficial to augmenting the process's results.

1. Stress Reduction

Stress can have an enormous impact on fertility. Of course, this is a classic Catch-22 scenario – fertility issues lead to stress, which leads to infertility, which leads to stress, which leads to... In the end, it can be very, very challenging to stay calm when dealing with infertility, but doing so is vital.

Stress can be reduced in a number of ways depending upon the personality traits of the individual. For instance, some people find yoga, tai-chi and pilates to be extremely stress-reducing activities. However, others find solace in more vigorous physical activities like running, aerobics and swimming. Additionally, stress relief for many comes in the form of diversionary activities like reading a novel, baking a plethora of goodies for a neighbor or relative or organizing one's house.



Two Real-World Ways to Implement This Fertility-Boosting Lifestyle Change:

- Get to know your own stress triggers. What makes you feel out-of-control? What makes you feel at peace? Learn how to gauge your moods so that your stress doesn't exceed a five or six on a one-to-ten scale.
- If you're struggling with the stress of fertility concerns and you can't seem to get a handle on your stress, seek a counselor's advice to help you put your fertility in proper perspective. Remember that fertility is only one aspect of your life.

2. Proper Nutrition

It turns out that a balanced diet can be a determining factor in fertility. A well-rounded eating plan includes a plethora of vitamins, minerals, omega-3 fats, whole grains, and other nutritional essentials. For example, antioxidants have been shown to help in reducing the free radical damage to ova, sperm and reproductive organs. Thus, women and men who carefully balance their intakes of so-called "bad" foods (e.g., high in saturated fat, high in sodium, high in empty calories) enable their bodies to perform at maximum levels.

Two Real-World Ways to Implement This Fertility-Boosting Lifestyle Change:

- Eat at home more often. Foods from restaurants, take-out places and fast food joints may sound healthy, but they are often not. Even salads can be loaded with unneeded fat and calories. By designing your own meals, you'll be able to better control what's going into your body.
- Keep a food journal. People who write down everything they eat and drink (including gum, Tic-Tacs and other seemingly "little" items) feel a heightened sense of accountability. Therefore, they often begin to adopt healthier eating styles.

3. Smoking Cessation

No smoker will tell you that smoking is a good habit; even those who are deeply addicted to nicotine know that their cravings are having a negative effect on their health. One of those effects is a reduction in fertility. For instance, in males, up to 90% of the instances of low sperm counts can be noticeably increased by tobacco-use cessation. And there are numerous ways to stop smoking, including everything from the "cold turkey" technique (which works surprisingly well for some personality types) to physician-recommended medications.



Two Real-World Ways to Implement This Fertility-Boosting Lifestyle Change:

- If you're a smoker, make a commitment to quit... today. If you've quit before and it's never "stuck", find a doctor or therapist who can help you on your journey to being smoke free.
- Reward yourself for every week you go without smoking. Go to a spa with a friend, take a half day off work to spend time by yourself, take a trip to a nearby city for sightseeing and shopping. Choose "treats" like these that won't ruin your nutrition but will encourage you to continue your path to breaking free of cigarettes and cigars.

4. Regular Exercise

Like nutrition, regular exercise is a basic way to boost fertility in both men and women. Studies have shown that moderately exercising about 30 minutes a day each day or every other day can balance the body's harmony. As a consequence, menstrual and ovulation cycles often become more regulated. (One caveat, however – excessive exercising, such as intense exercising for hours at a time on a daily basis, can lead to a stoppage of menstruation and can contribute to infertility.)

Two Real-World Ways to Implement This Fertility-Boosting Lifestyle Change:

- Find a physical activity you enjoy and schedule it into your planner. Don't allow too many days to pass without engaging in some kind of exercise, even if it's just a brisk 15-minute walk around the block.
- If you don't enjoy solo exercising, seek out an exercise partner. That way, you'll have someone else depending on you, which is a motivating factor.

5. Reduction (or Elimination) of Alcohol Consumption

In today's social settings, it's not unusual for women and men to enjoy a glass or two of beer or wine. Yet studies have shown that consuming alcohol may lead to problems with fertility. Even small amounts of alcohol can impair conception, especially in individuals who are older.



Two Real-World Ways to Implement This Fertility-Boosting Lifestyle Change:

- Unless you're a professional wine taster and it's essential that you drink adult beverages, why not cut them out of your diet altogether? If you drink red wine for the antioxidants, switch to red grape juice or pomegranate juice for a non-alcoholic alternative that still offers the benefits.
- Learn how to say no to alcohol. Many people find it difficult to turn down a cocktail, but there's no shame in saying, "Thanks, but I'm going to have to decline." Don't feel you need to give a reason, either. Fertility is a private concern. If the person offering you alcohol pressures you to give a reason, be firm and stand your ground.

New opportunities for infertile couples and persons to have children are always being developed by the medical community. However, it's important for those dealing with fertility issues to realize that they can have a hand in the potential success of the process.

As Dr. Munabi concludes, "I wish more people would take an active role in naturally boosting their fertility. If they did, we would increase the numbers of pregnancies among women of all ages who are struggling to conceive."