

THE FERTILE LIFE METHOD



# Fertile Life

FERTILITY IS YOUR NATURAL STATE



DR KIRSTEN WOLFE

CHINESE MEDICINE

# TESTIMONIALS

Whilst we would love to share them with you, we can't. Registered health professionals are prohibited by law from using testimonials of any sort under APHRA. The Australian and Chinese Medicine Association's (AACMA) code of ethics also prohibits the use of testimonials by members. For this reason there are no testimonials in this book

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*"Gratitude can transform common days into thanksgivings,  
turn routine jobs into joy and changed opportunities into blessings."*

– William Arthur Ward

Firstly and foremost I am eternally grateful to Jaime Seletto – for her writing skills to turn all my ramblings into readable words that have formed this book. I will be forever grateful for her skill, feedback and time. I was humbled to receive Dr. Jolyon Ford's expertise with Western Medical information. To the practitioners who have worked and work at Fertile Life who inspire me daily with their own unique gifts and love for fertility, pregnancy & birth. And for all feedback and first edits. Lisa Drenkhahn thank you so much for your contribution to the NLP section. To Sarsha & Emily for fresh eyes, edits and great feedback. Amy Bell for my cover design. To my dear friend Liss who after a glass of wine came up with the new name "Fertile Life".

Whilst the journey of developing the book from nothing to print took a short time, 9 months in fact – just like growing a baby! It is years of research, clinical practice and my heart and soul that are in the pages. I am humbled and thankful to all my patients for allowing me to be a part of their journey towards parenthood. I love my job, it feeds my soul... nothing is better than your patients telling you that they are pregnant, or cheekily giving you their BBT chart and waiting for you to work it out! Deepest love and gratitude to Shane, my love who keeps me sane & looks after me when I am way too busy. Lastly yet importantly to my two boys Seb & Felix who inspire me everyday.



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# *Chinese Medicine*

## FOREWORD

Chinese medical theory and practice is based upon a sophisticated diagnostic and therapeutic body of knowledge that has evolved over at least two thousand years and through many historical traditions. The present body of knowledge is the result of many of these traditions and practices having been amalgamated into a more coherent and structured system, commonly known as Chinese Medicine (CM). The diagnostic categories of CM describe recurring clinical patterns, taking into account both subjective symptoms and objective signs. These diagnostic categories have been used with relative consistency over twenty centuries of recorded clinical practice. This rich clinical legacy is now well recognised throughout the world and the Australian federal government has recently legislated to register CM as a health-care profession.

According to the CM paradigm, both health and disease are defined by specific characteristics. These include not only the absence or presence of discomfort and pain, regularity of sleep, digestive, respiratory, sexual and other behaviours but also observable qualities in the patient's mental function and demeanour as well as the pulse, tongue, skin, hair and other physical attributes. In this way, CM is an holistic form of medicine, which views the interaction between the mind, body and spirit as an integral part of the disease pattern and the restoration of health.

CM shares some ideas with other forms of complementary medicine, including belief in a strong interrelationship between the environment and bodily function and an understanding of illness as starting with an imbalance of energy or 'vital force'. This is defined as Qi, a fundamental substance that has the potential to activate all bodily functions and therefore is an essential force requiring manipulation in the process of restoring health. Underpinning this vital flow of Qi is the ancient philosophical concept of Yin and Yang. This concept is a sophisticated interpretation of the natural forces operating within both the external environment of nature and the internal environment of living beings.





Disease occurs when the relevant healthy balance of Yin and Yang is affected. This imbalance may occur as a result of external influences such as environmental factors, pathogens, dietary irregularities and/or internal stress-related emotional problems which may result from lifestyle irregularities. The CM view is that it is often a combination of these external and internal influences that may lead to ill health.

Treatment is aimed at restoring the vital balance of Yin and Yang within a holistic framework by assisting the person's innate physiological and, where appropriate, psychological powers of healing. Classical Chinese Acupuncture helps to circulate Qi or life force through a meridian or channel network. This network connects external acupuncture points with internal organ functions. Acupuncture techniques utilise the insertion of very fine acupuncture needles placed in strategically important points. In this way blockages of Qi (life force) which help to cause disharmony are cleared, this clearing of energy blockages then assists the natural healing mechanism within the body to be restored to a more healthy state. Chinese Medicine physicians also consider lifestyle, dietary, environmental and emotional factors as part of the assessment and treatment of disease.

CM also places a strong emphasis on disease prevention and health maintenance and the empowerment of clients to play an active role in their own health. Clients are encouraged to learn about the many factors influencing their health and to have regular treatment to maintain Yin / Yang balance.

*David Benn MEd., B.Ac., B.A*

**Chinese Medicine has been used for 2000 years successfully treating infertility and many other obstetric disorders. Many of the world's population uses Chinese Medicine as their main form of health care. We work harmoniously with the mind and body to establish a more normal equilibrium, conducive for conception. CM can be used as a stand-alone, natural, drug-free treatment option to enhance fertility and treat both medically explained and unexplained infertility. It can also be safely used in conjunction with conventional Western Medical fertility treatment including IVF. It has been shown in clinical trials to increase the effectiveness of IVF, ICSI and ART procedures. With the use of proven protocols Acupuncture has an added bonus for fertility treatment patients: it reduces the side effects of fertility treatments, including nausea, weight gain and mood swings whilst reducing stress.**



# *The Fertile Life Method*

## INTRODUCTION

*"Your body has the innate natural potential to create a healthy baby. All you have to do is put it in the right place to do so both physically and emotionally"*

Everyone starts their fertility journey from different places. Some of you are reading this book at the beginning of your journey, full of hopes and dreams. Some already have a child and are suffering from secondary infertility. Some have been trying for a while and would simply like some help. And others have been on this road a long time and tried everything from standing on their head after sex to the emotional rollercoaster of IVF.

We know that many couples trying to conceive feel that time is running out. This sense of urgency is common. So if you have felt anxious or powerless on your conception journey thus far, you are certainly not alone. We understand and we empathise.

My team and I have seen all of these types of journeys in the clinic, and what I want you to know is that there is always hope to dare to dream for a child.

From a Chinese Medical perspective, when your body, mind and spirit are healthy and in balance, your natural state is FERTILITY!

For many this can be achieved easily with adjustments to your lifestyle. But it will take inner strength for you to look at yourself objectively and acknowledge the changes that need to be made. There is a Chinese saying 'cultivating the soil before you plant the seed'. As a farmer spends months preparing the soil for planting, so must we. You will need to tend the soil and create a healthy environment so that conception can occur. With respect to fertility, cultivating the soil means giving the body, ovaries, sperm and uterine lining all the nutrients it needs for the embryo to implant and begin life. My team and I are here to guide you and be with you every step of the way.

I know that some of you have been told that you can't get pregnant, or that your chances are very low from a western medical perspective. From my experience of helping



thousands of couples on their fertility journey, I know that there is always hope. The human body and spirit has an amazing ability to get back to nature, back into balance (with or without working with IVF) and become fertile.

Too often in this day and age we are busy doing! When we struggle to become pregnant, we become busy “doing our infertility” – googling everything, controlling everything, always creating a plan of what to do next when this month doesn’t work.

As part of The Fertile Life Programme we ask you to stop, to feel what you are feeling now and to trust in the process. The heart must connect to the womb for life to occur. What are you doing to nurture yourself? How often are you doing this? If not, what is stopping you from starting now to put yourself first?

Our Fertile Life Method is about you and your practitioner working together.

The Method requires you to make the changes that are asked – get the tests that we request, make changes in your diet, slowdown in your life, be quiet and sit with yourself and all your emotions.

I am repeatedly asked by patients about our success rate, and the odds of them falling pregnant. Whilst it is a fair question, there is no straight forward answer. Fertility comes with so many variables. But what I can confirm is that the people who most often find success are those who have put in the hard work; eaten well, reduced stress, taken care of themselves and committed fully to making changes recommended by our practitioners.

Unfortunately, not everyone who comes to our practice is willing to commit and work hard. The reasons are many: they don’t have time, the lifestyle changes are an inconvenience, they don’t believe in it, they know someone who knows someone who said...

Good health is good for everything, so there are no losers with our program, except the ones who don’t fully commit and give up too soon.

This book outlines the fertility secrets that I share with all of my patients. We wish you every success and look forward to being part of your journey.

Best Wishes

*Kirsten Wolfe*





# THE FERTILE LIFE METHOD

Even though infertility is affecting more and more couples these days, the good news is that very few people are actually clinically infertile. Most women and their partners are simply not physically or emotionally in good reproductive health.

The Fertile Life Method is a devoted treatment and training program for infertility, pregnancy and birth support. It aims to help both couples and individuals conceive, sustain a full term pregnancy, and deliver a healthy child.

The power of our treatment plan is that it draws on the best of both eastern and western medicine in order to enhance fertility. Happily, the strengths of western medicine are in the areas in which eastern medicine is weak, and vice versa. By drawing on both practices, we have a more complete understanding of fertility.

We use an integrated mind-body medicine technique. With our method, Chinese medicine provides the framework, with western results and diagnosis providing a critical role in the administering of treatment.

No matter what your individual circumstances are, The Fertile Life Method can help you to enhance your reproductive health.

Your Fertile Life (FL) practitioner will use all of the information gathered from you and your partner to prepare an individual treatment plan based on your health picture. This plan will support you both to address underlying health issues, balance your system and create wellness. It will assist you on your conception journey whether you are seeking an all-natural solution, or pursuing assisted reproductive therapies.

Your practitioner will help you:

- Understand your hormones and your menstrual cycle
- Understand your basal body temperature chart
- Understand the fertility process



- Understand your body better
- Get your hormones into balance
- Regulate ovulation
- Enhance egg quality and production
- Improve the quality of your cervical mucus and endometrium
- Strive for optimum health and well being
- Manage stress and emotional well being
- Manage gynaecological issues
- Increase blood flow to reproductive organs
- Prepare for and support IVF treatment

They can also help your partner:

- Strive for optimum health and well being to become the healthiest version of himself
- Improve sperm quality
- Understand and become more involved in the fertility process

Fertile Life is here to help. We will work tirelessly with you both to establish a more normal equilibrium, which will encourage conception. We have had huge success in assisting our patients on the journey to parenthood.

We look forward to being part of your story.



## CHAPTER 1

# *Understanding Conception*

*"Faith is taking the first step even when you can't see the whole staircase"*

– Martin Luther King

**W**e know that you already have a basic understanding of how conception occurs, but it is important for you to review the key information outlined in this chapter in order to increase your chances of falling pregnant.

Every baby girl is born with somewhere between one and two million eggs in her ovaries, more than you could ever need! With this in mind, the average woman will only release about 400 of these during her reproductive years from the onset of her first menstrual cycle.

At some time during your menstrual cycle (usually somewhere in the middle) one of these eggs will become the dominant follicle and reach maturity. Lutenising hormone is triggered, set off by the pituitary gland in your brain, will signal an eruption of the egg, which is released into your abdominal cavity and immediately scooped up by fimbriae and into the fallopian tubes. This process is called ovulation. An egg will survive for 12 to 24 hours after release from the ovary, so fertilisation is only possible during this small period of time.

Your menstrual cycle is counted from the first day of your period (this is full flow not just spotting) to the day before the next bleed. You will see a lot of information based on the average 28 day cycle, with ovulation occurring on day 14. It is essential for you to understand that a healthy menstrual cycle can be anywhere between 26



and 40 days and the day of ovulation varies dramatically from woman to woman. Your menstruation can start anywhere from 11 to 16 days after you ovulate.

Men make sperm on a regular basis, and it takes approximately 116 days to create a new sperm cell from start to finish. The average sperm only lives a few weeks in a man's body (so don't try to save them up!), and somewhere between 30 – 300 million sperm are released with each ejaculation.

Sperm production starts in the testicles, and to produce healthy sperm they have to stay about four degrees cooler than normal body temperature. Once sperm is created, it is stored in a section of the testicles known as the epididymis until it's mixed with semen just prior to ejaculation.

Sperm can survive for up to six days in the uterus before ovulation occurs, however it is more likely that they will only last between one and three days.

Despite the millions of sperm produced and ejaculated, only a few dozen make it to the egg and one sperm can fertilise an egg to create conception.

One of the most important things you can do to increase your chances of conception is to have intercourse on your most fertile days – the four days immediately leading up to and including ovulation.

Whilst couples should consult their Fertile Life Practitioner about the best intercourse strategy, generally speaking your chances of conception improve if you have sex once a day, every day inside this fertile window.

- For many women, it is difficult to accurately pinpoint the day and time of ovulation. However, tracking your Basal Body Temperature (BBT) – a rise in basal body temperature (BBT) signals ovulation has occurred. When you ovulate, there is a slight increase in your temperature (of approximately 0.2 – 0.4 degree Celsius).
- Changes in cervical mucus – cervical mucus that is slippery, wet and clear indicates fertility and impending ovulation. It can be found at the vaginal opening or on toilet

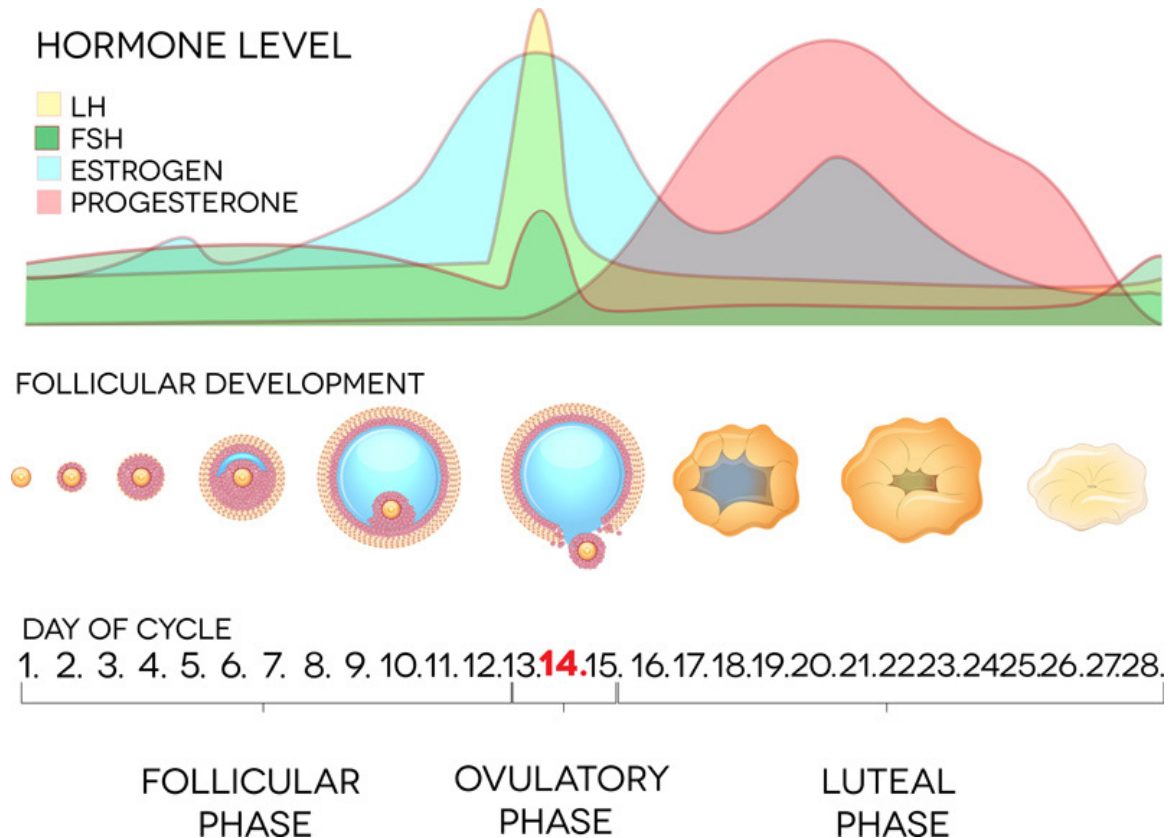


paper when you wipe after going to the toilet. It resembles egg white consistency, the colour can vary from women to women, but it will generally be stretchy, clear and odourless.

- Regular menstrual cycle – You are likely to ovulate 11-16 days prior to the end of your cycle, and on approximately the same day each month..
- Ovulation pain – Approximately one in five women experience pain on the right or left side of the abdomen, which indicates that ovulation, is occurring. Be mindful that the pain you experience may not be ovulation pain but bowel pain.

It is important to keep in mind that assuming that you and your partner have no medical issues and you have intercourse at the 'right time', there is still only a 15-25% chance of becoming pregnant in each ovulatory cycle.

You will be taught more about fertility awareness in your session with your Fertile Life Practitioner.







## CHAPTER 2

# *Charting your basal body temperature*

*"The natural essence of the universe gives life to all things."*

**B**asal body temperature charting is an important diagnostic tool in the Fertile Life Method for treating infertility. The BBT chart gives your Fertile Life Practitioner greater insight into the timing and quality of your menstrual cycle. It can help us to confirm ovulation, distinguish fertile times and evaluate your overall reproductive health. It is a particularly useful tool in identifying any hormonal imbalances and other weaknesses in your menstrual cycle.

At Fertile Life, we recommend that all of our patients start recording their BBT readings daily as soon as possible. Your practitioner will review your chart every time your visit and discuss their findings with you in detail.

Basal body temperature (BBT) is the **lowest temperature attained by your body during rest.**

To record your BBT, you will need to purchase use an *ovulation thermometer*. Thermometers made especially for BBT charting are calibrated with a finer scale than a normal thermometer. This allows them to recognise the lower temperatures associated with women's hormone levels and record very slight changes in body temperature.



Digital basal thermometers are easily purchased from a chemist, and are inexpensive and easy to use. Please make ensure that you read the instructions enclosed and follow them carefully.

Most thermometers can be used either orally or vaginally. Usually, oral readings are fine. However, vaginal readings might be required if your oral readings are inconsistent.

You can record your BBT on a hard copy paper temperature-plotting chart, or use one of the many free computer/phone based applications that are now widely available.

When recording your temperature on a BBT chart, it is important that you:

- Take your temperature immediately after you wake up each morning, before your get out of bed, speak or drink
- Try your best to take your temperature at the same time each morning
- Use a consistent collection method – orally/vaginally if orally the same side of your mouth under the tongue in the fleshy part where your tongue sits
- Start a new BBT chart on the first day your cycle (first day of full flow menstrual bleeding).

There are four phases of your menstrual cycle- your menstrual phase, follicular phase, ovulatory phase and luteal phase.

## FOLLICULAR PHASE

During the first part of your menstrual cycle (the follicular phase) estrogen is the dominant hormone in a woman's body. Estrogen helps you to produce your egg and is a "cool" hormone, meaning your core body temperature is slightly cooler during this phase.



## OVULATION PHASE

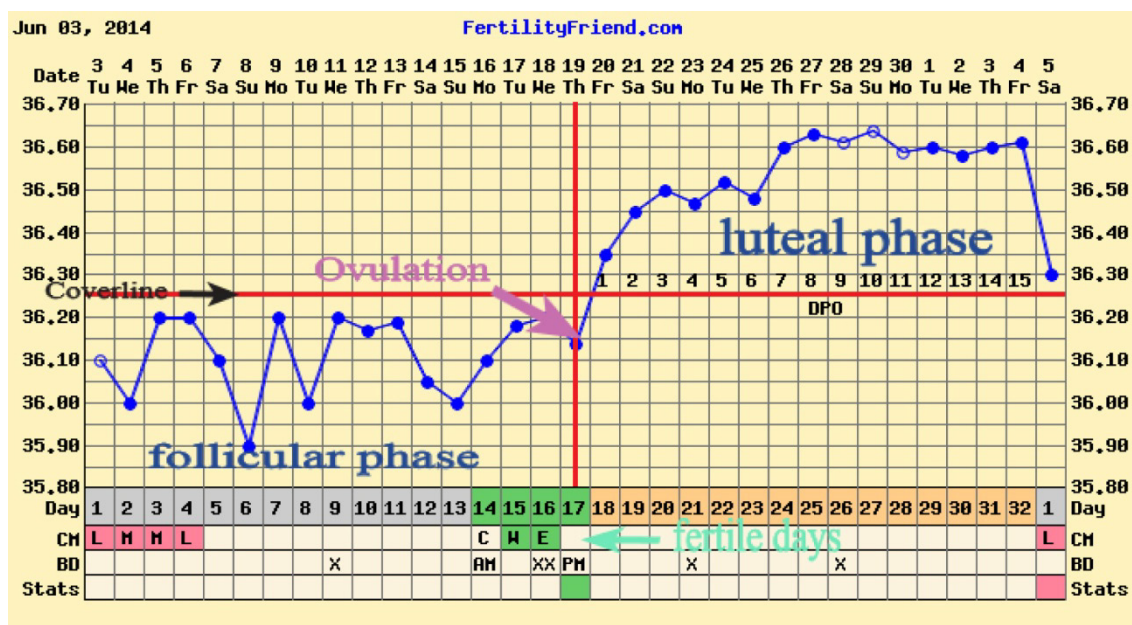
As you approach ovulation, your cervical fluid will increase due to increased estrogen and become more obvious, wet, cold, clear and stretchy. The 3-5 days prior to ovulation is called your fertile window or ovulation phase. Right before ovulation you might also notice a slight drop in your BBT. You are most fertile on the day of the temperature spike, and the two days preceding that shift.

## LUTEAL PHASE

When you ovulate, an increase in progesterone (a "warm hormone") triggers a slight increase in your temperature (of approximately 0.2- 0.4 degree Celsius).

During the second part of your menstrual cycle (the luteal phase) progesterone will continue to be the dominant hormone until it drops in anticipation of your menstrual period.

Fertile Life BBT Chart





Your temperature needs to stay elevated for at least three days in a row for you to be confident that ovulation has occurred. By the time you notice this spike in your temperature, you will have already ovulated. This means that charting your temperature will only tell you when you have ovulated (after the fact).

You are most fertile on the day of the temperature spike, and the two days preceding that shift.

Please remember that temperatures will rise and dip day by day and the actual temperatures you record are not as important as the pattern your chart will show. Every woman's cycle is different, and there is a huge range of normal. Your own chart is likely to look dramatically different from month to month, so please try not to compare your chart to other charts that you come across.



## CHAPTER 3

# *Your physical health and fertility*

*“Tackle difficulties when they are easy. Accomplish great things when they are small. Handle what is going to be rough, when it is smooth. Control what has not yet formed its force. Deal with a dangerous situation while it is still safe. Manage what is hard while it is soft. Eliminate what is vicious before it becomes destructive. This is called attending to great things at small beginnings.”*

It is easy to feel a real loss of control when faced with infertility. Therefore, you will be pleased to know that there are many things that you and your partner can start doing immediately which will drastically improve your fertile health.

A well-known Chinese proverb states, ‘when the soil is well prepared, the harvest will be bountiful’

It is important for both men and women to understand that their lifestyle directly affects their fertility. So planning for a baby must involve learning how to live a healthy lifestyle, not just for one’s own well-being, but for the health of a baby and adult it will grow into.





## FOR BOTH PARTNERS:

### STOP SMOKING

We all know that smoking is bad for us but when it comes to fertility its negative effects are even more profound. Smoke decreases the oxygen level in your blood, meaning that less oxygen is carried to your cells. Without a good supply of oxygen, the cells in your body cannot work properly. This can have an irreversible effect on a woman's ovaries and causes a deterioration of both eggs and sperm, making it harder to conceive. It can also affect the genetic makeup of your unborn baby if you are lucky enough to fall pregnant whilst smoking.

The *American Society for Reproductive Medicine* says "Almost all clinical studies support the conclusion that smoking has an adverse effect on fertility. The prevalence of infertility is higher, and the time it takes to conceive is longer, in smokers compared to non-smokers. Active smoking by either partner has adverse effects, and the impact of passive cigarette smoke exposure is only slightly smaller than for active smoking."

Research indicates that cigarette smoking is harmful to a woman's ovaries where life will begin for your future baby and the degree of harm is dependent upon the amount and the period of time a woman smokes. Smoking appears to accelerate the loss of eggs and reproductive function and may advance the time of menopause by several years.

It was also shown that men who smoke have a lower sperm count and motility and increased abnormalities in sperm shape and function. The best available scientific data indicates that cigarette smoking strongly contributes to infertility.

Smoking should be discouraged for both male and female partners in couples with a history of infertility or recurrent miscarriage. Smoking cessation may improve natural fertility and success rates with infertility treatment.

"Smokers require nearly twice the number of IVF attempts to conceive as non-smokers"

For some couples, smoking means they may never have the family they dream of.



## AVOID ALCOHOL

Drinking even moderately can make it significantly more difficult to fall pregnant.

Alcohol is a toxin, which exhausts your body's energy. It requires a huge effort to remove it efficiently, counterbalance the negative effects, and rebalance your body's equilibrium. The more you drink, the greater the effect it can have on your fertility.

Alcohol affects both male and female fertility.

In men, alcohol can reduce testosterone levels, which leads to a loss of libido. It can also stop sperm from developing properly, damaging its quality, movement, volume and structure by stopping the liver from functioning effectively. Excessive long-term alcohol consumption can also reduce the size of the testicals. This can lead to impotence, sterility, loss of facial and body hair and growth of breasts.

In women, alcohol interferes with the hormonal system that controls reproduction. Even a small amount of alcohol can cause an imbalance in a woman's menstrual cycle and reduce the chance of conceiving. Excessive long-term alcohol consumption can cause women to have irregular periods, stop ovulating, or experience early menopause. Heavy drinkers who do become pregnant are more likely to experience a miscarriage.

We suggest that both partners avoid alcohol for at least 3-4 months to detoxify and elevate your body to its optimum health before attempting to conceive, and most definitely for women throughout pregnancy and breast-feeding.

## AVOID RECREATIONAL DRUGS

Recreational drugs, including (but not limited to) marijuana, cocaine, ecstasy, ICE, heroin and anabolic steroids impact on fertility.

The primary concern is that they can impair hormone production in both men and women. Hormones are responsible for the natural ebb and flow of fertility and if hormone levels are off balance or altered in any way, fertility will be affected.

Men who use recreational drugs can also suffer from reduced libido, poor sperm count, sperm abnormalities and erectile dysfunction



Women who use recreational drugs can also suffer from ovulatory dysfunction and menstrual irregularities which need to be perfectly balanced to conceive and carry a baby to term.

We suggest that both partners also avoid recreational drugs for at least 3-4 months before attempting to conceive, and most definitely for women throughout pregnancy and breast-feeding.

## AVOID CAFFEINE

Caffeine is one of the most widely available drugs in Australia. It is a nervous system stimulant, which can affect other organ systems, cause a rise in heart rate and blood pressure and accelerate metabolism.

Caffeine has a negative effect on fertility and should be avoided where possible. Research shows that even one cup of coffee a day causes an imbalance in sex hormones, which compromises both sperm and egg health.

In women, the lining of the uterus is also affected, which may stop a fertilised egg from implanting. Caffeine is also thought to impact on the muscles in a woman's fallopian tubes. When working efficiently these muscles contract in smooth, rhythmic surges to help the egg travel to the uterus. Caffeine is thought to interrupt this rhythmic pattern of movement.

Multiple studies have suggested that caffeine consumption increases the risk of miscarriage. Caffeine also has the ability to cross the placenta and directly affect the developing baby.

Common sources of caffeine include: tea (green, white and black tea), coffee, chocolate, fizzy drinks and some medication. Always check the back of the product label if you are unsure.

We recommended that both men and women stop consuming caffeine completely whilst trying to conceive, and women do not start again until after they have stopped breast-feeding.



## STAY HYDRATED

Water is one of the most important ingredients for life. In order to optimise your fertility, it is essential that you and your partner keep well hydrated.

We are all exposed to various toxic substances. An accumulation of toxins in our bodies can contribute towards hormonal imbalances, or even directly affect sperm and egg cells. Drinking plenty of water helps flush these toxins out of us.

Water also helps to deliver hormones throughout our bodies. Given that an imbalance of hormones is behind many fertility issues, hydration is essential to ensuring that the hormones get the places that they are needed in our bodies.

In men, dehydration can lead to low sperm volume and low sperm count. A man's ability to ejaculate also becomes slower.

In women, adequate water consumption helps to enhance the amount and quality of fertile cervical mucus. Healthy cervical fluid is needed to assist the sperm to reach the egg and is essential for conception. A higher water intake can also stimulate circulation and improve egg health.

Don't drink whilst eating and don't drink cold water from the fridge (drink water at room temperature only).

Please listen to your body. It will tell you when you are thirsty.

## EXERCISE REGULARLY

Exercise releases endorphins, which are the body's natural feel good chemicals, and when they are released, your mood is boosted naturally. As well as contributing to your overall good health, exercise is a fabulous stress reliever and a wonderful distraction. In Chinese medicine, it also has the benefit of moving blood and Qi around the body.

Many couples today are exercising to improve their health, but some are going about it in a damaging way. Not all exercise is healthy. Over-exercising is one cause of infertility in women. Women who exercise excessively are at risk of losing too much body fat, which can stunt the production of estrogen and cause irregular ovulation. It is also common for women who over-exercise to stop getting their menstrual periods entirely.



Good exercise for fertility includes (but is not limited to) walking, swimming, yoga and pilates.

Never exercise to the point of excessive sweating or exhaustion.

Please discuss exercise with your Fertile Life Practitioner to determine an activity level which is suitable for you.

## MAINTAIN A HEALTHY BODY WEIGHT

As well as being bad for your overall health, being under or over weight can have a significant impact on fertility.

Overweight women face an increased risk of fertility problems compared to their peers who maintain a healthy weight range. Being overweight can cause your body to produce excess estrogen, which can make it harder to get pregnant. Obese women are at a greater risk of having an absent or irregular menstrual cycle and have a much higher chance of a luteal phase defect in the second phase of their cycle. Being overweight is linked with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), an endocrine disorder which is major contributor to infertility in women. Excess weight can also increase complications during assisted reproductive treatments and raise the risk of miscarriage.

Being underweight can also make it harder for women to fall pregnant. Women who have a very low level of body fat may have issues with their hormone levels, which can disrupt ovulation and their menstrual cycle.

Overweight men can have significantly lower sperm count. Obesity has been connected with raised testicular temperatures, which even further impairs sperm production, function and DNA integrity.

Happily, bringing your body into a healthy weight range can improve your chance of conception and minimise the risks of pregnancy complications.





## EAT A BALANCED DIET

Very simply, you are what you eat.

Every natural food that you consume has a medicinal effect on your body, which will alter how your body functions. Ensuring that your body gets all of the nutrients that it needs, is of the utmost importance for your fertility health.

Healthy eating plays a huge role in your reproductive health, enhancing egg and sperm quality and ensuring that your baby is healthy throughout pregnancy and beyond.

Your Fertile Life Practitioner can provide you with a comprehensive fertility diet.

## GET ADEQUATE SLEEP

The quality and quantity of your sleep affects your fertility. While we sleep, our bodies rejuvenate, grow, repair cells and regulate hormones.

Poor sleep can alter circadian rhythms, affect your fertility hormones, and disrupt your menstrual cycle and ovulation.

Poor sleep also interferes with a man's ability to produce sperm. Men who suffer from disturbed sleep generally have a lower sperm count and poorer quality than their well-rested peers.

Where possible:

- Start a relaxing bedtime routine.
- Be consistent with your sleep routine. Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day.
- Keep your bedroom as dark as possible
- Avoid working night shifts if possible
- Keep your bedroom work and electronic free (inc Iphones)

We suggest that you and your partner sleep 7 – 9 hours in order to boost your fertility.



## AVOID PESTICIDES AND CHEMICALS

There is a never ending supply of continuing research to show that the high levels of contaminants in our foods and homes are causing havoc with our health.

Chemicals disrupt your hormones (or endocrine system). This means that they have a negative impact on your fertility both directly and indirectly.

It is almost impossible to avoid chemicals altogether in today's modern world, but we suggest you reduce your exposure wherever possible.

Learning to replace certain items in your life with natural and less toxic alternatives that don't contaminate your body or the environment will maximize your fertility and increase the chances of having the healthiest baby possible.

The following everyday household items have been linked to infertility:

- Sud-forming products – soaps, shampoos, cleaning agents
- Antibacterial products – hand washes, gels, disinfectants, air fresheners
- Products with non-stick surfaces – pots, pans, baking gear
- Agricultural and horticultural sprays – insecticides, pesticides
- Grease-cutting cleaning products – oven, glass, carpet, surface cleaners
- Cosmetics and cleaning products with fragrance – fabric softeners, shampoos, disinfectants, air fresheners, laundry detergents
- Painting products – paints, lacquers, varnishes, paint strippers and other solvents
- Aerosol sprays – insect repellents, deodorants
- Canned foods
- Dry-cleaned clothing

Baking soda, lemon and vinegar can replace most household cleaners.

Health food shops have many natural alternatives for personal and beauty products.

Please speak to your Fertile Life Practitioner for further information.



# WHAT'S IMPORTANT FOR THE FEMALE VERSUS THE MALE PARTNER

## FOR WOMEN:

### ORGASM

Whilst a female orgasm is not essential for conception, a female orgasm (with or after her male partner ejaculates) can increase the chances of achieving a successful pregnancy. When a woman orgasms, the contractions of the uterus help to pick up the sperm and deposit it near the cervix. The orgasm then helps to move the sperm through the uterus and fallopian tubes.

**Take a good quality preconception and pregnancy supplement**

Regardless of whether you are eating organic produce and a healthy diet, you are unlikely to be getting all the nutrients your body needs for optimal fertility from your diet. This is why supplementation is important. Getting pregnant and growing a new human being with your own reserves, requires a surplus of nutrients and energy. We recommend practitioner only brands such as Bioceuticals or Metagenics which are both available at the clinic. By using "Practitioner Only" products, under the guidance of a qualified health practitioner, you can be assured of quality, potency and purity.

Fertile Life practitioners have undertaken education and have access to ongoing learning, in order to recognise the correct use of the supplements, specific doses required in different fertility conditions, and considering any possible interactions with other supplements or medications.



Basic supplements include:

- Women's multi vitamin
- Fish Oil
- Folate/Folic acid 500mcg
- Magnesium

Intermediate and or IVF supplements may include:

- Evening Primrose Oil – increase fertile mucus, regulate menstruation and PMS
- Vit E 1000iu– increase fertile mucus, improve egg quality
- Royal Jelly – help increase follicles and improves fertile mucous
- Deer Antler – 500mcg (1-4) – increase progesterone in the luteal phase.
- Melatonin
- CoQ10
- Vitex
- Iodine
- Maca
- Iron – blood test to confirm
- Vit D – blood test to confirm
- Zinc – blood test to confirm

## FOR MEN:

### AVOID EXCESSIVE HEAT & COMPRESSION OF TESTICLES

The enzymes required for sperm production are very sensitive to heat. The reason that the testicles hang away from the body is that it's about 4 degrees cooler than normal body temperature. In order to ensure good sperm health:



- Do not use laptop computers on your lap
- Do not keep your mobile phone in your pocket
- Avoid spas, saunas and hot tubs
- Do not wear tight fitting underwear or pants
- If you sit for long periods or time, get up and move around frequently
- Avoid bike riding for long distances (more than 20 minutes in a row)
- Don't sit with your legs crossed

## EJACULATE REGULARLY

A healthy man is able to replenish his full supply of sperm within 24 hours, so having sex as often as once a day should not affect fertility. In fact, having intercourse every day or every second day in the time leading up to your ovulation should increase your fertility.

Basic supplements may include:

- Men's multi vitamin – includes zinc, selenium, vit E, tribulus, vit C, folic acid & vit B12
- Fish Oil
- Antioxidant

Intermediate and or IVF supplements may include:

- CoQ10
- L-Carnitine
- Magnesium
- Deer Antler
- NAC





## CHAPTER 4

# *Fertility Eating Plan*

*"The food you eat can be either the safest and most powerful form of medicine or the slowest form of poison."*

— Annde Wigmore

**D**eveloping a nutritional plan to improve your fertility odds takes a little time, however this is one of the most important changes you and your partner can make.

As food and air are the primary means of sustaining life, it is essential that a specific and appropriate nutritional plan is followed to help lay the foundation for optimum parental and embryonic health.

A natural fertility eating plan is not just healthy eating; it is a way of eating that supports your body in its reproductive efforts. It focuses on foods which are needed for hormonal balance, egg and sperm health and foetal development. And is intended to help your body balance existing fertility issues and provide the building blocks for a healthy pregnancy.

Your Fertile Life Practitioner can help you with an individual eating plan which takes into consideration any possible infertility diagnosis, but until that time, please follow these basic rules:

When choosing foods always chose the foods as nature intended. Eat as your ancestors would have eaten, with plenty of uncontaminated wholefoods and no processed or packaged foods. Your great-grandmother wouldn't have eaten Allens Snakes lollies or Frozen Dinners would she?!



# EATING TO INCREASE FERTILITY

Where possible, please follow these basic rules:

- Avoid/reduce processed food and sugar
- Avoid/ reduce dairy and soy based foods
- Eat alkaline, rather than acidic foods
- Get plenty of essential fatty acids
- Eat organic food when you can
- Eat plenty of seasonal fruits and vegetables
- Eat at least one large green salad per day
- Eat at least one dark leafy vegetable per day

Important foods for fertility:

- Eggs – farm fresh free range with dark orange/yellow yolks.
- Nuts and Seeds – especially Almonds, Walnuts , Flax seeds, Chia seeds, Pumpkin seeds, Sesame seeds, Sunflower seeds, Hemp seeds
- Lentils and other beans
- Gluten-free grains – quinoa, brown rice, buckwheat, millet etc
- Fish and Shell Fish – Eat mostly cold water fish (like Alaskan salmon and cod), avoid large deep water fish (like tuna steaks and swordfish) because of potential for high mercury levels.
- Grass-fed organic meats – have higher levels of nutrients
- Liver – exceptionally nutrient dense
- Dark leafy green vegetables – especially spinach, broccoli, kale, and collards.
- Colourful vegetables – eat a wide variety daily that are in season
- Fruit – fruits highest in antioxidants are prunes, pomegranates, raisins, blueberries and strawberries. Eat ripe and raw.



### Foods to avoid:

- Alcohol – all
- Caffeine – even 1 cup per day can create hormone imbalance
- Soy foods – can create hormone imbalance
- Soft drink and bottled juices – can alter blood sugar levels, affect immune system
- Sugar and artificial sugars – stevia, honey, and maple syrup are good alternatives
- Fat-free foods – highly processed and high in sugar
- Trans fats – found in processed and fried foods
- Refined carbohydrates – like white bread, pasta, and white rice
- Genetically modified foods
- Any other highly processed foods
- Large deep-water fish (like tuna steaks and swordfish) because of potential for high mercury levels.

### Fluid intake:

- Drink a warm glass of water with fresh lemon when you first wake in the morning
- Drink lots of clean filtered water
- Don't drink when eating
- Drink when you feel thirsty, don't flood your system

### Helpful tips:

- If you can't afford organic food, buy locally grown produce or grow your own
- Eat slowly and chew your food properly
- Don't eat late at night
- Make juices and smoothies to increase your fruit and vegetable intake



# EATING TO INCREASE MALE FERTILITY

There are a number of vital nutrients which benefit sperm quality and increase sperm production. These include zinc, folic acid, vitamin B12, vitamin C, L-carnitine, co-enzyme Q10 and selenium

Here is a great little combination of sperm-supercharging foods that can be combined into a trail mix to get you through the day:

- Goji Berries – antioxidants
- Brazil nuts – highest food source of selenium and increases testosterone
- Walnuts – polyunsaturated fatty acids
- Raw cacao nibs – magnesium, iron and potassium
- Pumpkin seeds – zinc





## CHAPTER 5

# *A balanced mind*

*"Your living is determined not so much by what life brings to you as by the attitude you bring to life; not so much by what happens to you as by the way your mind looks at what happens"*

-Kahlil Gibran

**N**ever underestimate the power of the mind.

Only recently, a new study by researchers in Wisconsin, Spain and France (published in the Journal Psychoneuroendocrinology) reported the first evidence of specific molecule changes in the body following a period of mindfulness meditation practice. They showed that if the perception in your mind is reflected in the chemistry of your body, and if your nervous system reads and interprets the environment and then controls the blood's chemistry, then you can literally change the fate of your cells by altering your thoughts.

**Stress, anxiety and negative thoughts all impact negatively on fertility.** Ironical isn't it, that the one thing we want more than anything, sometimes is being stopped from happening because of how much we want it!

The human body is programmed with a fight or flight response to high stress situations. In years gone by, this would have assisted in the past when faced when humans would encounter a sabre-tooth tiger. In our modern society, we are faced with chronic, low-grade, persistent stress because of our overly complicated and demanding lifestyles; work stress, money stress, family stress, unhealthy lifestyle stress, and even negative emotion stress. This type of stress is something that our bodies are not built to manage very well.





Stress and anxiety contribute to infertility predominantly because of the increase of the stress hormone cortisol. High levels of cortisol lead to immune, digestive and reproductive suppression. It essentially creates a hormone imbalance within your body. And when your hormones aren't balanced, your fertility is compromised. Our bodies are specifically designed to prevent conception from occurring during times of extreme stress.

In addition to infertility, there are many signs that stress is affecting your health, including:

- Weakened immune system
- Decreased sex drive
- Junk food cravings – especially for sugar and carbs
- Fatigue – despite getting good levels of sleep
- Feeling tired first thing in the morning
- Inability to fall asleep or stay asleep at night
- Mood swings
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Headaches
- Need for stimulants – sugar or caffeine
- Low tolerance for stressful situations

One of the biggest complaints voiced by women suffering with infertility is that they feel “out of control.” Reconnecting with yourself can help you to regain control of your fertility journey. Having the tools and knowledge to understand your journey can help reduce this stress and anxiety and further your self-awareness.

Happily, there are many things that you can do to nourish your mind and soul. Relaxation is not a switch you can flip on, but setting boundaries and making positive changes to your life will make a difference to your mental and physical health. Essentially, you need to train your body to slow down and think positively in order to move your body and mind forward in the right direction towards fertility.



**Unplug** – When you get home, turn off all of your technology and unwind from your day. Work and stress will follow you around 24/7 if you let it. It's up to you to take charge and set boundaries.

**Appreciate what you have** – Infertility can become all-consuming and as a result we can forget all of the other wonderful things that shape our lives. Try to spend 5-10 minutes every day thinking about the things that you are grateful and happy for

**Get emotional support** – Men and women facing fertility challenges often feel disheartened and isolated. Many struggle to talk about their problems with friends and family who already have children or are at a different stage of life. Research oFLine and in your local area for fertility support groups. You can make connections with people who can relate to your experiences, and offer you the support and understanding you may have been missing,

**Meditation** – Breathing exercises/meditation will help to soothe your mind and naturally decrease feelings of stress and anxiety. If you're just starting out, you'll be amazed by what even short periods of quiet will do. It is a practice, so you have to work on it to get better and better. Focus on breathing deeply for at least 10 breathes to begin with. Inhale slowly through the nose taking and long as you can, hold, and exhale as slowly as you inhaled. There are many fertility meditations for natural, or assisted conceptions, which are a great online downloadable resource.

**Positive affirmations** – It is extremely important to stay positive and have a quiet mind for fertility. Positive affirmations are a great way to bring this positive outlook back into your life. Affirmations are positive statements that describe a desired situation. It allows you to set aside negative thinking that does not support your desired outcome. The more we practice our new type of positive thinking, the more we lock them to our thinking patterns.

**Visualisation** – As well as giving you much needed down time, visualization exercises can help you to focus on what you want, and prevent negative thoughts from crowding your mind. They have been shown to significantly reduce stress.

**Cognitive Hypnotherapy** – Fertile MindSet uses a modern approach to hypnotherapy through fertility relaxation CDs. It is more than fertility relaxation. Cognitive Hypnotherapy moves you on in your journey. It allows you to let go of the underlying causes of the pain, anger and stress and help you move from despair to hope and actively utilise the mind-



body link to guide your body to success. The tracks on The Fertile Mind are deliberately short so that listening to one each day is sustainable and enjoyable.

**Massage** – can help relax the body and calm the mind. Consider deep relaxation massage treatments such as Hot Stone Massage, Head and Shoulder massage or Shirodhara. All deep tissue massage should be avoided during the Luteal phase of the women's cycle.





# *Acceptance*

*Grant me the courage to take charge to those things over which I have control –  
my diet and what I take into my body,  
physical exercise which take care of my physical being,  
stress reduction exercises which take care of my mental being  
prayer and meditation to take care of my spiritual being  
the power I have to take care of my health,  
to ask for help.*

*accepting and expressing my feelings,  
my attitudes and beliefs,  
the depth of my breath,  
the environment which I put myself,  
the people I choose to surround myself with,  
believing in my own capacity for wellness,  
my own peace of mind  
and what I will and will not compromise.*

*Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change –  
the past, anyone else,*

*situations outside of my immediate control,  
whether the spark of life with ignite in me.*

*I may wish and pray, but outcomes are not granted through effort alone.*

*And the wisdom to know the difference.*

*Hope propels us forward, but positive things will not get us pregnant.*

*Desire must be separate from outcome.*

*If I don't know intuitively know the difference,*

*I will breathe deeply until the answer comes from within.*

THE FERTILE SOUL



## CHAPTER 6

# *Neuro Linguistic Programming*

*"The act of "pushing" for something, in its nature pushes it further away. If you want something you must first let it go."*

- Kirsten Wolfe

**A**ny problem that you have is only a problem in the way you think about it. And changing your thought patterns is easier than you think. One of the best therapy based tools available to help create a balanced mind and fertile body is NLP – Neuro Linguistic Programming.

You are likely to find many different descriptions of NLP. But essentially NLP is a treatment option with a wide range of methods and models for understanding how people think, behave and change. It offers a flexible approach which brings about positive, fast change in individuals and organisations.

NLP has been around since the 1970's, and was conceived by John Grinder and Richard Bandler's curiosity. Why are some people so much better than others in certain fields? What is that "difference" and how can we a) learn it and b) teach it to others? To cut a long story short, they discovered how to "model" the way people do things and then teach it to others.





NLP tools are the most effective way to transform our limiting or negative perceptions into positive and realistic perceptions that are useful to us. In this way NLP can be used to heal the past, so that we can experience the present with greater conscious awareness and therefore be proactive in our actions toward the future that we desire.

When applied to fertility, NLP utilizes the mind-body connection to heal the cause of stress and anxiety in this context, and have a positive influence on one's attitudes and beliefs about fertility, pregnancy and parenthood, as well as optimising the function of the reproductive system down to a cellular level.

Many of the problems we experience in life, including infertility, are the creation of a belief or thought so deep in our unconscious mind that we are unaware of it day to day. NLP tools help to get to the root of the problem that is causing the infertility even if this is physiological – to then heal the belief and the mind to create a new environment for success in the body.

Stress (or how we respond to stress) can be key to allowing our bodies become fertile. Stress, anxiety, unexpressed or overexpressed emotions and unresourceful beliefs affect the nerve cells that send messages to all parts of the body, this in turn increases the stress hormone Cortisol. High levels of Cortisol lead to immune, digestive and reproductive suppression. It essentially creates a hormone imbalance within your body. And when your hormones aren't balanced, your fertility is compromised. Our bodies are designed to prevent conception from occurring during times of extreme stress. Please be aware this is long term stress, not a simple stress over what to cook for the in-laws or a bad day at work!

***"Time and gentleness with oneself heals all wounds."***

There are a number of studies that have been conducted which highlight the benefit of mind/body techniques:

Dr Alice Domar's study published in 2000 in the Journal of Fertility and Sterility, found that 55% of the previously infertile women in the mind/body techniques group conceived, compared to just 20% of the controls group.



## WHAT WILL AN NLP SESSION DO FOR YOU?

NLP can help you:

- stop the negative emotions and stress about fertility issues and increase feelings of calm
- resolve inner conflicts/issues that may be unconsciously stopping conception
- address fears about pregnancy & birth
- address relationship issues
- unresolved trauma, including previous miscarriage or still birth or terminations
- terminations
- unresolved grief, anger, sadness, fear or any strong emotions
- work/life balance
- stop smoking
- stop drinking
- remove block to losing or gaining weight
- bring back a sense of control
- improve intimacy and sexual relationship
- prepare for IVF and other fertility treatment
- create resources for going through IVF process
- build inner resources
- trust in your body and ability to get pregnant and carry to term
- learn to balance your body and mind
- release emotional blocks that may be getting in your way
- help create the perfect environment for you to conceive a healthy baby



## HOW MANY SESSIONS WILL YOU NEED?

NLP is solution focussed. We are concerned with unconscious patterns of behaviour, not with *why* a behaviour or state presents itself in certain contexts. So dealing with infertility with NLP should really only take two or three sessions. Once the new patterns are laid down in the unconscious mind, change can become apparent straight away or within a small frame of time, depending on the context.

The first session will usually last around 1 ½ hrs.

## WHO HAS THE SKILLS? WHO DO WE RECOMMEND?

We only recommended practitioners that are extensively trained in NLP, including:

### ***Victoria***

- Holly Clarke – 0407 310 138

### ***QLD***

- Melissa Scott – [www.equinoxlifecoaching.com.au](http://www.equinoxlifecoaching.com.au)

Or any practitioner trained by

- [www.nlpmelbourne.com.au](http://www.nlpmelbourne.com.au)
- [www.inspiritive.com.au](http://www.inspiritive.com.au)
- [www.thecorporatewarrior.com](http://www.thecorporatewarrior.com)





## CHAPTER 7

# *The Fertile Life Method*

*Yǎng Shēng (養生) may be the most important concept in TCM and the culture of Chinese health. By definition it is not medicine; it's wellness and self-care. The Chinese word "Yang" means to nurture, take care of, and nourish; "Sheng" means life, birth, and vitality. Together "Yang Sheng" means to nurture or nourish life — fostering health and well-being by nurturing body, mind and spirit in harmony with the natural rhythms, and with universal laws.*

**T**he Fertile Life Method has been built around Chinese Medicine, the latest clinical research and the teams 50+ years of combined experience of working with couples trying to conceive. It provides both couples and individuals who have been experiencing primary and secondary infertility, whether through IVF or trying to conceive naturally, with a comprehensive program of natural treatment options to conceive and achieve a successful pregnancy.

We know that when faced with infertility many couples feel that time is running out. This sense of urgency is understandable, but unfortunately often leads to greater levels of stress, and paradoxically reduces the chance for a successful pregnancy. We understand and we empathise. Our approach differs from some, in that we do not try to force as result. Instead we work harmoniously with the mind and body to establish a more normal equilibrium, conducive for conception.

Our approach can metaphorically be seen as a way to gently turn back the hands of time with regard to an individual's reproductive condition. The Fertility Program is conducted



over a three to eighteen month period. This program was developed to gently but effectively return each client to their individual optimum reproductive state

Regardless of your medical diagnosis, state of mind or physical health, the Fertile Life Fertility program is designed to address the underlying causes of infertility. It focuses on rebalancing your fertility health and enhancing your success of having a baby. Each component of our method is backed with clinical research to show its effects on improving fertility health.

Nature is complex but all that is required for conception and a healthy pregnancy is a balanced and healthy body and mind, the way that nature intended it to be.

In our clinics we see couples experiencing (but not limited to) recurrent miscarriage, unexplained infertility, IVF, high FSH, low AMH, PCOS, endometriosis, fibroids, ovarian and uterine cysts and male infertility – including all forms of sperm abnormalities.

In most cases the plan is straightforward for couples experiencing these problems. It involves making a series of guided lifestyle changes, combined with specific treatments and supplements that are designed to bring the body back to its natural state of balance. Once in balance, it will work efficiently and pregnancy is the natural conclusion.

The Fertile Life Method works by bringing your body back to natural balance and health, which results in an increase in your fertility health. A clinical diagnosis of any one of the aforementioned fertility issues can still result in having a baby. Results generally come down to how much you're willing to make the right lifestyle changes, and persevere with them until you conceive and have your baby.

Addressing fertility issues successfully is a two-fold approach:

- Firstly you need to have the tools to reveal what the underlying problem is. This should provide a clear diagnosis of the physical problem and the underlying imbalance. As well as all our Chinese Medicine diagnostic tools it also includes but is not limited to blood tests, ultrasounds and semen analysis.
- Secondly you need to have a treatment plan that applies the essential components that your body requires, to change the underlying imbalance and restore your natural fertility.

Our treatment plan uses a combination of the following, tailored to your needs:  
**Acupuncture** – used for over 2000 years to treat infertility and gynaecological problems in





China. It is a very gentle and effective treatment for restoring your fertility health. In simple terms, acupuncture can alter blood flow and produce changes in the body's nervous system.

- **Herbal medicine** – serves to address the root of your problem and does this by chemically and gently altering your body to bring about balance, and enhance your natural fertility. Herbal medicine is a highly specialised and very effective method for enhancing fertility health.
- **Nutrition** – A vital part of any conception plan, we combine ancient Chinese Nutrition Therapy and western nutrition with current nutritional supplementation to offer you the absolute best in nutritional understanding available today. Supplementation is also necessary in some cases and your practitioner will discuss this part of nutrition with you in detail, to make sure you are getting every nutrient that you need.
- **Relaxation Therapy** – We also encourage our patients to participate in varied relaxation therapy activities, including massage, reflexology, meditation, yoga etc.

Our treatment plan:

- **Preparation for conception** – This is the starting point for dealing with the underlying issues that are preventing you from having a baby. Stage 1 is a one-off time period, usually 3 months to prepare your body for conception and help to get you focused, healthy and ready for conception and pregnancy. If you are doing IVF, we often recommend taking some time out to prepare, even if it is only for a month or two.
- **Optimising conception** – Once completed the preparation time, your body will be in the best possible place to conceive either naturally or with assisted conception, you will know your body and when it is ovulation – hence the best time to have sex. This stage is all about optimising and finely tuning your body to encourage implantation and a healthy pregnancy.
- **Supporting pregnancy and reducing the risk of miscarriage** – Once you have conceived and are pregnant, it is advisable to support your pregnancy particularly through the first 12 weeks with weekly treatments, which is the most delicate time of pregnancy. Then monthly treatment until 36 weeks when we begin Pre Birth Acupuncture.

The Fertile Life Method is designed to balance the underlying causes of the most common fertility problems, including:





- Unexplained Infertility
- PCOS (Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome)
- Endometriosis
- Ovarian and Uterine Cysts
- High FSH
- Blocked Fallopian Tubes
- Male Infertility - Sperm abnormalities of all types including: Azoospermia (no sperm at all)

When used for assisted conception, our plan also supports and enhances the treatment cycles of:

- IUI – Intrauterine Insemination
- IVF – In Vitro Fertilisation
- ICSI – Intracytoplasmic sperm injection
- Egg donation

Your practitioner will help you to:

- Understand the fertility process
- Understand your body better
- Get your hormones into balance
- Regulate ovulation



- Enhance egg production
- Improve the quality of your cervical mucus and endometrium
- Strive for optimum health and well being
- Manage stress and emotional well being
- Manage gynaecological issues
- Increase blood flow to reproductive organs
- Prepare for and support IVF treatment





## CHAPTER 8

# *Fertility Testing*

*"Your body's ability to heal is greater than anyone has permitted you to believe."*

**F**ertile Life recommends that you and your partner have a full medical reproductive evaluation prior to your first visit with us. This testing will give your Fertile Life Practitioner a complete understanding of your current fertility health and will enable us to administer the best possible combinations of treatments for your personal situation from the outset.

One of western medicines greatest strengths in combating infertility lies in its ability to diagnose fertility issues.

Please use a reproductive healthcare provider (general practitioner (GP) or fertility consultant) that you trust and feel comfortable with. This will reduce your stress levels through this process, and again improve your chances of achieving a successful pregnancy.

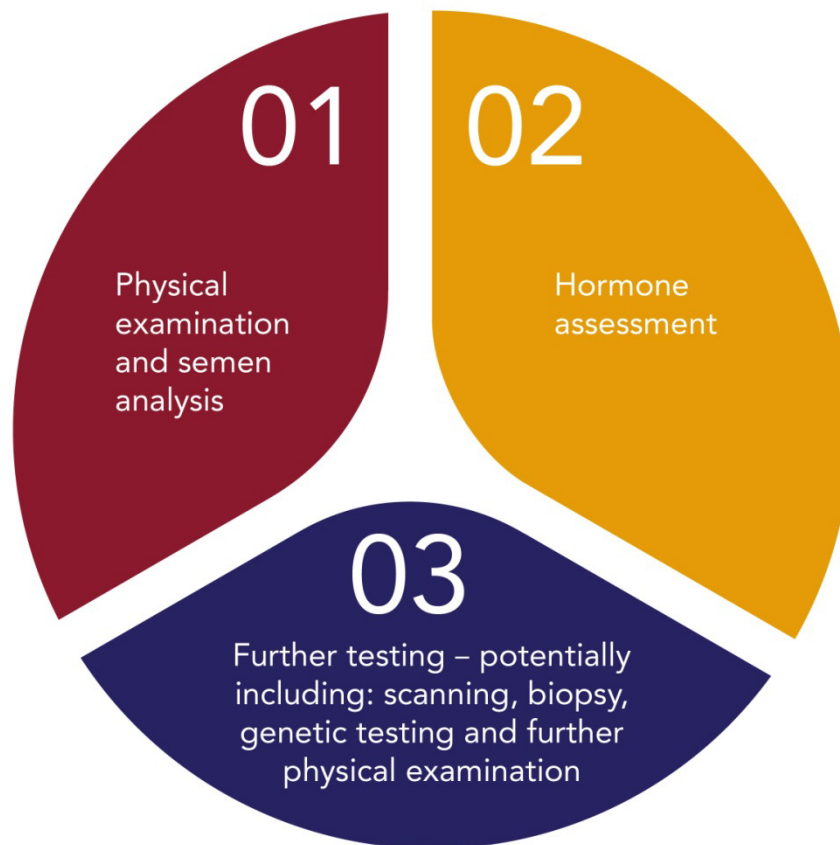
If your doctor has not yet suggested fertility testing, we strongly suggest that you discuss the following tests with them:



# MALE TESTING

We suggest that fertility testing starts with the male partner, as the procedures are usually much simpler and less invasive than the testing carried out on female

Male fertility testing can be broken up into three broad categories:



Having said this, the physical examination and semen analysis are usually sufficient. Once the results from these tests arrive, you can discuss whether further testing is required with your medical practitioner.

## PHYSICAL EXAMINATION AND SEMEN ANALYSIS

A physical examination will be carried out to check for any visible evidence of physiological problems within the testicles.



Following this, a freshly ejaculated semen sample will need to be collected and assessed. This simple test will provide a comprehensive overview, and is the most important diagnostic tool in the initial investigation into male fertility.

A sample of semen is taken, ideally at a clinic, and then tested immediately for optimum results. The specimen is best collected by masturbation into a sterile container. Before testing, a period of 3 to 4 days of abstinence from ejaculation is recommended.

The basic test accurately measures the number of sperm, their morphology (shape and size), their motility (ability to move forward), and the volume and consistency of the ejaculated sample. It is possible to have a more in-depth sperm test that will also include antibody testing and sperm DNA fragmentation.

Illness and medication can have an effect on sperm health for the period of three months prior to the test being taken, so it's best to discuss these issues with your health provider. If the first test is abnormal it is routine to request a re-test.

If the quality of the sperm is consistently poor, a hormone assessment should be carried out to investigate what else is happening internally.

## ENDOCRINE SERUM ANALYSIS BLOOD TEST (HORMONE TESTING)

When semen analysis shows to be considerably abnormal, and is not responding to effective treatment, it can also be useful to test the hormones involved in spermatogenesis. This blood test tells us if there is a problem prior to the testes in sperm production. These hormones are utilized in the testes to produce sperm:

- Follicle Stimulating Hormone (FSH): induces sperm production in the Sertoli Cells
- Luteinising Hormone (LH): triggers testosterone production in the Leydig Cells
- Sex Hormone Binding Globulin (SHBG): transports and activates testosterone and is synthesized in the liver
- Bound & Unbound Testosterone: related to SHBG. *Bound* testosterone indicates testicular activity relating to sperm production. *Unbound* testosterone relates to non-spermatogenic activity of the testes.



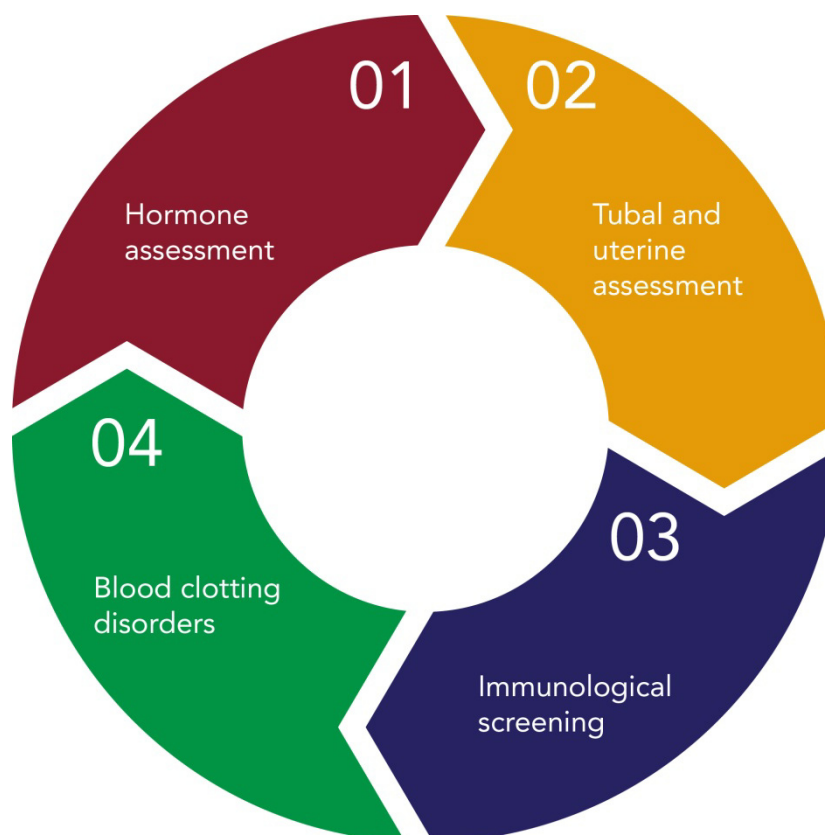
Illness and medication can have an effect on sperm health for the period of three months prior to the test being taken, so it's best to discuss these issues with your health provider.

## FURTHER TESTING

In very rare cases, further testing is required to check the health of the testes and to rule out any genetic issues. Your fertility consultant would advise you of the necessary tests based on the results from the above mentioned procedures. They can include scanning, further physical examination, genetic testing and blood tests.

## FEMALE TESTING

Female fertility testing can be broken up into four broad categories:







## HORMONE ASSESSMENT – (BLOOD TEST)

Blood tests can identify any hormonal imbalances in your menstrual cycle. In fertility testing, two blood tests are necessary to investigate the two phases of your menstrual cycle.

**The follicular phase** – The first blood test is carried out on around day 3 of your cycle (day one being the first day of bleeding).

This test looks at the levels of the following hormones:

**Follicle Stimulating Hormone (FSH)** – FSH is produced by the pituitary gland to stimulate the growth and development of ovarian follicles. This test is used as a baseline measurement of your ovarian reserve and egg quality. A high FSH may indicate a low oestrogen production from the ovaries, which can affect the growth and development of your eggs and endometrium (uterine lining). High FSH levels can be reduced naturally.

**Estradiol (E2)** – This test measures your oestrogen level, which is secreted by your ovarian follicles. When balanced it will develop the growth of eggs and thicken the endometrium. It also balances FSH levels and stops them from rising too high. If you have a low level of E2, your eggs may not mature sufficiently or they may not be able to implant due to the thin quality of the endometrium. If there is too much E2, there will be a variety of symptoms and this is often present if your Body Mass Index (BMI) is too high or there is insulin resistance as in the case of PCOS (polycystic ovary syndrome).

**Luteinising Hormone (LH)** – LH is released by the pituitary gland and stimulates ovulation, the formation of the corpus luteum (tissue from a follicle that has released an egg), and the production of Progesterone, which is needed during the luteal phase. A surge of LH around half way through your cycle, triggers ovulation and you release an egg. High levels of LH may indicate PCOS.

**Prolactin** – This hormone is involved in the production of breast milk after childbirth. Prolactin is tested if you have irregular or absent periods. High levels can be produced by over production from a gland in the brain (called the pituitary gland). Some women with PCOS have slightly elevated levels. High prolactin may interfere with ovulation and/or progesterone levels may also be affected causing problems with conception.

**Thyroid Hormone (TSH, T3, T4 & reverse T3)** – TSH is responsible for controlling thyroid function and is important for the metabolic processes in your body, which affect all your body systems. TSH should always be checked if there are delays in conception, as a low



TSH will indicate an imbalance of the thyroid, which may cause fertility problems until this is addressed.

**Androgens** – These are male hormones that are checked to further rule out PCOS. If androgen levels are high, it may be due to the pituitary gland producing large amounts of LH, which prevents ovulation and causes high levels of male hormones to be released.

**The luteal phase** – A blood test known as "Day 21 test" looks at your progesterone levels to confirm ovulation has occurred. It should be carried out *7 days after ovulation*.

Many doctors will suggest that they carry out this test on day 21 of your menstrual cycle. However, as not everyone has a 28 day cycle, this is not always correct. Your hormone level does not rise sufficiently until 7 days after ovulation, so please provide information about the length of your cycle and ensure that you are tested at the correct time.

During ovulation, a mature egg is released from your ovarian follicle. After ovulation, this follicle produces large amounts of progesterone. Progesterone is responsible for preparing the endometrium (lining of your uterus) for implantation and supporting the early pregnancy. If your progesterone levels are low, your body may not be creating the right environment to sustain a viable pregnancy.

## TUBAL AND UTERINE ASSESSMENT

These medical tests will assess whether there are any potential blockages in your fallopian tubes that might interfere with the travelling of eggs or sperm. They will also evaluate uterine issues that might prevent implantation.

There are four main tests available, and your medical practitioner can advise you on the validity of these for your personal situation:

**Hysterosalpingogram (HSG)** – This test will identify a blockage in the fallopian tubes. Liquid dye is put into the cervix and an x-ray is used to track the movement of the dye. This process will highlight any blockage or scar tissue causing a problem.

**Ultrasound Contrast Sonography** – This is a similar test to the hysterosalpingogram but uses saline or other fluids which are injected through the cervix whilst an ultrasound is being performed. This avoids exposure to x-ray radiation and allows assessment of the uterine cavity and tubes.



**Laparoscopy** – This is an invasive test that requires a general anaesthetic and short hospital admission. A small incision is made near your navel, and a laparoscope (camera) is inserted to inspect the abdominal cavity, uterus and fallopian tubes.

**Hysteroscopy** – This test involves mild sedation or a local anaesthetic and is sometimes done at the same time as a laparoscopy. The hysteroscope is inserted into the uterine cavity via the cervix to look for any irregularities, including adhesions. This test is often used as the preparation for mapping your uterus before an IVF treatment cycle begins.

## IMMUNOLOGICAL SCREENING

The immune system refers to all parts of the body that work to defend it against harmful enemies. A healthy immune system would identify an enemy correctly and attack only foreign invaders like parasites, viruses and harmful bacteria's. In people with immunological fertility problems their body identifies part of reproductive function as an enemy and sends Natural Killer (NK) cells to attack.

Natural Killer cells can be measured in the blood or in the uterus. The endometrial NK test is a uterine biopsy that is performed on day 21 of the menstrual cycle. This is the most accurate test. The procedure is done at a doctor's office or at a hospital, and gives a detailed reading of the number of NK cells in the uterine lining. This test will establish whether there is an imbalance of natural killer cells, which may cause problems with implantation.

Immune screening can be carried out via two blood tests which are usually six weeks apart, but this testing is not as accurate and is currently not available in Australia.

If there are high levels of antibodies in your uterus, they may interfere with a fertilised embryo, which may result in your body rejecting the embryo. There are numerous studies that have shown a correlation between recurrent miscarriage and immune disorders.

Immunological testing can be expensive and lengthy, and is still subject to ongoing research, but it may be worth discussing with your medical practitioner if you fall into one or more of the following categories:

- You have had two or more miscarriages
- You have good and healthy embryos that have failed to implant during IVF cycles
- You have been diagnosed with unexplained infertility



## BLOOD CLOTTING ASSESSMENT

There are a number of acquired and inherited blood clotting disorders. These conditions cause the blood to clot too easily or prevent clots from dissolving properly. Some are genetic disorders, while others result from a problem in the immune system.

The most common fertility issues related to blood clotting disorders are failure for the embryo to implant or recurrent miscarriages

Blood clotting disorders are easily diagnosed through a blood test at any time of the menstrual cycle.

If you have a family history of blood clots, or are experiencing recurrent miscarriages, ask your doctor about testing for clotting disorders. Your doctor may also want to test for these conditions if you have experienced previous pregnancy complications, preeclampsia or stillbirth.

Once diagnosed, most clotting disorders are manageable, and most women with these conditions go on to have normal pregnancies.

## RESULTS

Once you and your partner have a comprehensive female and male reproductive evaluation you will have a clearer understanding of any issues that may need to be treated.

Any diagnosis will form the foundation of a Fertile Life fertility treatment strategy. An individual programme will be created for you to make vital changes to address the underlying imbalance that is causing your physical or hormonal problem. It is important to understand that we often view and treat diagnosis with a different outlook from those that may have been outlined to you when seeing a western medical doctor.

If you haven't been diagnosed with any physical problems, then treatment will be focused on identifying what is out of balance with your physical and emotional health. At Fertile Life, we also suggest that you undertake our wellness panel of blood tests for overall health (including, but not limited to FBE, ferritin stores & Vitamin D).



## CHAPTER 9

# *Common fertility issues & treatment for women*

*"The Valley Spirit never dies. It is named the Mysterious Female. And the doorway of the Mysterious Female is the base from which Heaven and Earth sprang. It is there within us all the while; draw up it as you will, it never runs dry."*

- Tao Te Ching

**T**here are a number of common fertility issues that we see and treat regularly in our clinic. These issues may have been diagnosed during your comprehensive fertility testing, or they may be something that your Fertile Life Practitioner discusses with you after they have assessed your overall fertile health.

### LUTEAL PHASE DEFECT

The luteal phase is the active second half of the menstrual cycle, occurring after ovulation, when the uterine lining should become lush to provide for a fertilised embryo. A strong 11 – 14 day luteal phase is necessary for successful implantation.

When a luteal phase defect occurs, this means that the hormone progesterone isn't produced in adequate amounts, the follicle hasn't developed properly, or the tissue is unresponsive because of stress or other 'environmental' reasons. As a result, the uterine lining may fail to respond to the body's progesterone output and won't support a pregnancy. In the case of luteal phase defect, if a lack of progesterone were the only





reason for this deficit, the administration of progesterone would cure it. Yet rarely does progesterone alone cure luteal phase defect. The endometrial glands must be able to respond to the progesterone in preparation for a successful pregnancy.

A luteal phase less than 11 days in length, low progesterone levels, spotting before menstruation and a slow rise in body temperature after ovulation may all be indications of a luteal phase defect.

Fertile life recognises the presence of low progesterone as a symptom, but ultimately sees luteal phase defect as an indicator of an underlying imbalance within your reproductive system. The underlying causes of luteal phase defect can be attributed to stress, pituitary imbalances, energetic blockages, improperly nourished follicles, or lack of blood flow. Our treatment assists the body in producing adequate progesterone, and most importantly, in responding to the body's own progesterone production in preparation for a healthy, on-going pregnancy to resolve luteal phase defect scenarios.

## POLYCYSTIC OVARIAN SYNDROME (PCOS)

Polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) is a hormonal disorder that affects almost all aspects of the endocrine system, the hormones, the ovaries, and the eggs which are developing within the follicle. Women with PCOS may also have insulin resistance, glucose intolerance and lack of ovulation

The underlying causes of PCOS may be hormonal or hereditary. Symptoms may include irregular periods, late or absent ovulation, excessive facial hair, obesity (though many PCOS patients are thin), loss of head hair, light headedness when you haven't eaten, increased skin thickness and persistent acne.

Diagnostically, the most distinguishing signs of PCOS are the changes that occur in the ovaries. They are usually larger than average, and on ultrasound have more dense tissue within the ovaries together with multiple small follicles clustered around the edge.

Many western medicine fertility specialist will recommend drugs like Clomid (designed to induce ovulation), which has been shown to be effective, Metformin, hCG or gonadotrophin injections to treat PCOS. If these drugs fail, assisted reproductive techniques like IVF are often suggested.



PCOS can cause delayed ovulation, failure to ovulate, and if a pregnancy occurs, can increase the chance of ending up in miscarriage. We believe that addressing the whole health of the woman is important when treating PCOS in order to maximise the chance of conception and to assist in maintaining a healthy pregnancy. Hence, our treatment protocol on its own, or in conjunction with western medical treatment for PCOS consists of a regimen of dietary and nutritional guidance, exercises and Acupuncture to improve blood flow to the ovaries, and herbal remedies to regulate the hormones and naturally induce a healthy ovulation, reduction of follicles, while also addressing the issues of stress

## ENDOMETRIOSIS

Endometriosis is the abnormal growth of endometrial tissue outside the lining of the uterus where these cells are normally found. It is believed that most women have endometrial cells outside the uterine cavity, yet it is the body's response to those cells which can prevent pregnancy. In some women the body's immune system reacts to the endometrial tissue which can have a number of effects. The tissues in the pelvis can become inflamed which can cause pain and scarring (adhesions). This can sometimes directly affect fertility by damaging the tubes and ovaries, or by preventing the egg from being released and passing down the tube. In addition substances that can have a direct harmful effect on the egg, sperm or embryo can be released from the inflamed areas. Other effects such as altering the local hormones and reducing the ability of the embryo to implant have been described.

Women suffering from endometriosis often experience painful periods, painful intercourse, back pain or severe abdominal cramping during menstruation, depression and anxiety. Having said this, approximately 40% of women with this condition report no symptoms other than infertility.

Western medical treatment for endometriosis typically prescribes pain-relieving and anti-inflammatory medication, and then either uses surgery to remove the deposits of endometriosis and treat the scar tissue or uses hormone-controlling drugs to reduce stimulation of the endometrial tissue. Inflammation or scarring can continue to be a fertility obstruction after these treatments.



Fertile Life seeks to resolve the underlying cause of endometriosis by allowing the uterine lining to be properly released, so that menstrual blood flows freely and the body's inflammatory reaction calms down.

## HIGH FSH

FSH (follicle stimulating hormone) is the hormone responsible for stimulating the growth of follicles. It also plays a pivotal role in the maturation of eggs. If a woman's FSH levels are "a day 3 FSH value of over 10 mg/dl," then she is considered to have high FSH.

Typically, symptoms of high FSH may include those of low oestrogen (hot flushes, night sweats, vaginal dryness), but sometimes may also be associated with too much oestrogen.

The underlying causes of high FSH may include reduced production of oestrogen from the ovaries (as occurs in the menopause), energetic blockages, or lack of ovarian response to pituitary production of FSH.

Western doctors usually believe that elevated FSH indicates a low ovarian reserve, and diagnose advanced maternal age and poor egg quality. This stems from the belief that a woman has a limited supply of eggs, which deteriorate as she gets older. The usual recommendation for a patient with this diagnosis is IVF using donor eggs.

Whilst menopausal women will eventually have a permanent increase in their FSH levels, levels in women before the menopause will often fluctuate and a high single reading does not necessarily mean the woman is infertile. Some women with high FSH are menopausal and no amount of treatment will make their ovaries produce eggs. To us if you are still getting periods and periodically ovulating high FSH is simply that – a number. High FSH is the result of the woman's body trying to improve the response of ovaries. Once the underlying deficiencies/imbbalances are corrected, high FSH may be corrected as well. This is why women who have previously been told that they are too old or poor responders can become pregnant once their bodies achieve a state of balance,. As we age, our bodies pay less attention to the reproductive system. Our program encourages your body to normalise the hormones, and increase blood flow to the ovaries and uterus, while we reduce the effects of stress on your system. This increases egg quality even with a diagnosis of infertility because of high FSH.



## AUTOIMMUNE INFERTILITY

Sometimes a woman's immune system, which is supposed to protect her from invaders like viruses and cancers, can turn against certain aspects of her own reproductive system. When the immune system becomes hyper vigilant, it can prevent the expression of certain proteins and glands in the uterus, which are necessary for implantation, no matter whether fertilisation is achieved naturally or with IVF. Further, the immune system can form antibodies and attack an embryo, not allowing it to implant and grow.

Women who have reproductive autoimmune issues will often feel flu like reactions at certain times in their menstrual cycle or some menopause like symptoms.

Regardless of the appearance of these immunologic factors, whether they are diagnosed as antinuclear antibodies, antiendometrial antibodies, anticardiolipin antibodies, antiphospholipid antibodies, anti-lupus anticoagulant, natural killer cells, increased clotting factors, or the expression of the MTHFR gene, the immune system must be retrained so it knows which aspects of self/non-self are safe and which are harmful.

Fertile Life believes that it is essential to treat the cause of the autoimmune issues, along with its manifestation, in order to correct infertility. When this happens, the markers in the blood or uterine lining correct themselves and the body stops reacting harmfully to pregnancy. We aim to calm the reactive immune process while simultaneously strengthening the immune and endocrine systems.

## PREMATURE OVARIAN FAILURE

Most women experience menopause, the natural loss of ovarian function, between 45 and 55. Menopause is considered to be premature when it occurs spontaneously before a woman reaches the age of 40.

POF is a common condition, occurring in one in every thousand women between the ages of fifteen and twenty-nine, and one in every one hundred women between the ages of thirty and thirty-nine. The average age of POF onset is 27-28 and in most cases there is no identifiable cause.

Women with POF stop menstruating, or have abnormal cycles with early or no ovulation. They can also experience hot flushes, night sweats and vaginal dryness. Approximately 50



per cent of women with POF experience intermittent ovarian function after their periods initially stop.

Western medicine will typically suggest IVF with donor eggs for women experiencing this issue.

While we acknowledge that a POF diagnosis can be challenging to treat, Fertile Life considers that the remedy is always to gently balance and heal all aspects of the mind, body and soul. This condition is ultimately a breakdown in communication between the brain and the ovaries. Our typical treatment to restore this communication would include dietary modifications, yoga, stress reduction, herbs, and acupuncture to improve blood flow.

## MECHANICAL BARRIERS TO CONCEPTION

Sometimes conception is not possible, simply because the path from the ovary to the uterus is obstructed. Blockages can be caused by scarring from infection or surgical procedures or congenital defects. Most fallopian tube obstructions produce no symptoms, but adhesions or scar tissue can cause pain. Treatment for a tubal blockage is always some kind of surgery to remove or reduce the blockage

The most common blockages are:

- **Pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)** – is usually the result of an infection of a woman's reproductive organs. The infection is usually sexually transmitted. Most issues associated with PID are caused by scarring from past infections.
- **Fallopian Tube obstruction** – is a common result of PID, adhesions and a condition called salpingitis. The fallopian tubes are such narrow structures, so it doesn't take much to block them.
- **Adhesions** – form naturally within the body as a healing response to tissue trauma. They can impair mechanical functioning and block the passage of the egg. The commonest causes are infections, inflammation (such as PID or appendicitis), or previous surgery.

Fertile life can treat both the symptoms and infection of active PID alongside antibiotics to address the underlying imbalance and calm the body's inflammatory response. We also





utilise a number of herbal and lifestyle techniques to help remedy fallopian tube inflammation.

## HORMONE IMBALANCES

Your body's reproductive system is run by the interaction of hormones and your organs. A hormone imbalance will show up in your blood work. Fertile Life's approach is to treat the source of the problem, using dietary and lifestyle changes, supported by acupuncture and herbal prescription. Our goal is to achieve hormone balance through overall wellness.

## RECURRENT MISCARRIAGE

Some women are able to conceive, but are unable to sustain a pregnancy. Miscarriage can be more frustrating than infertility because it is harder to find the cause, and it has fewer treatment indicators than other conditions which cause infertility.

Embryonic defects are the most common reason for miscarriages. However, some women have certain conditions (see autoimmune infertility) where their body prevents a foetus from developing.

## UNEXPLAINED INFERTILITY

Unexplained fertility means that routine investigations do not identify an obvious medical reason to explain why you are unable to conceive.

If the body is not able to do what it was meant to do during the reproductive years, there may be an imbalance which is preventing its expression. While it might not be severe enough to reveal itself in many laboratory diagnostic evaluations, the imbalance is enough to prevent the miracle of pregnancy from occurring. It is for this reason that at Fertile Life, we do not believe there is such a thing as unexplained fertility.

"Unexplained infertility" is usually the easiest diagnosis for our program, as the imbalance is usually very subtle, and major medical problems have been ruled out. In most cases, your body or your partner's sperm analysis will give us indications of where the problem lies. Treatment plans differ greatly according to these symptoms.



## MALE FACTORS

Male infertility is much easier to diagnose than female infertility, but harder to treat.

In the case of a potential obstruction of sperm in the seminal tract, the only potential remedy is surgery.

However, most male infertility issues centre on poor sperm production or quality. And almost all aspects of sperm production can be improved using Fertile Life's treatment plan. We focus on a combination of dietary changes, nutritional supplements, herbal therapy and acupuncture to increase sperm health.



## CHAPTER 10

# *Common fertility issues & treatment for men*

*"Growth begins with the ability to honestly see ourselves without judgement."*

- Kirsten Wolfe

**T**he infertility rate here in Australia is estimated to be one in six couples. In 40 – 45% of these cases, male infertility is found to be a contributing factor. However, the focus on fertility treatments always seems to be skewed towards treating the female partner. Marketing of fertility treatments is usually directed at women, reminding them that the clock is ticking. Even in IVF, a lot of stress is placed on the woman to follow strict schedules. Somewhere along the line, it has been forgotten that men play an equally important role in conception.

The Fertile Life program focuses on both men and women.

It takes between 80-116 days for a single sperm to be created. Because they are smaller and more exposed to environmental factors, sperm are indeed more vulnerable than eggs.

Pre-conception health-care for males is therefore essential, especially during this 3-4 month period where sperm is being created. The factors leading to male infertility need to be identified, and then appropriate diet/lifestyle changes and treatment need to continue throughout this period. Potential dads need to re-consider how they lead their lives and how they treat themselves and their bodies, as their health can impact directly on the



health of their offspring. Leukaemia, asthma, respiratory disease, mental development/disease have all been linked to the health of the father and his sperm.

A good semen analysis should include the following factors:

- Volume – shows total volume of ejaculate
- pH – shows balance between acidity and alkalinity
- The presence of debris or round cells indicates if there are other things in the ejaculate. If present can indicate inflammation or infection.
- Liquefaction displays how easy it is for sperm to be set free to fertilise the ovum
- Viscosity assesses the 'stringiness' of liquefaction
- Agglutination/aggregation indicates how much sperm are 'clumping' together and free to move
- Concentration indicates the density of sperm cells per mL
- Count is a figure based on the concentration x volume, the actual number of sperm cells
- Morphology indicates the shape of the sperm head and is an indicator of overall sperm health
- Motility indicates how many sperm cells are able to move properly, indicating health of the tail
- Vitality refers to the overall proportion of live sperm
- Anti-sperm antibodies indicate if there is an immune response killing sperm cells (can be present in women's uterus as well as in men)
- DNA Fragmentation indicates whether your DNA within the sperm head is good. Poor DNA will lead to non-viable embryo, and is often the cause of recurrent miscarriage.

Sperm analyses tell us about the health of the testes, as this is where sperm is produced.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed the following **lower reference limits** for normal semen analysis:



- Total volume — >1.5mL
- Total sperm number – 39 million per ejaculate
- Concentration — at least 15 million/mL
- Vitality – 58% live
- Morphology — > 4% normal forms
- Motility — 32% sperm with forward movement
- White blood cells — fewer than 1 million per mL
- Further analysis (sperm mixed anti-globulin reaction [MAR] test) shows adherent particles in less than 50% of sperm.

The "normal" values from a Chinese Medicine perspective for **natural conception** and **optimal IVF** for these parameters are:

- **Volume:** 2-6mL
- **pH:** at least 7
- **Viscosity:** normal
- **Liquefaction:** should occur within 20-60 minutes of ejaculation
- **Concentration:** >50-120 per mL
- **Aggregation/Agglutination:** 'Grade 1' (<10 spermatozoa per agglutinate)
- **Motility:**
  - Total: >50-70%
  - Progressive: >45-65%
  - Rapid progressive: >25%
  - Motility index: 150+ out of score of 300
- **Vitality:** generally only assessed when motility scores are poor; at least 60% live
- **Anti-sperm antibodies:** preferably absent; <20% if present

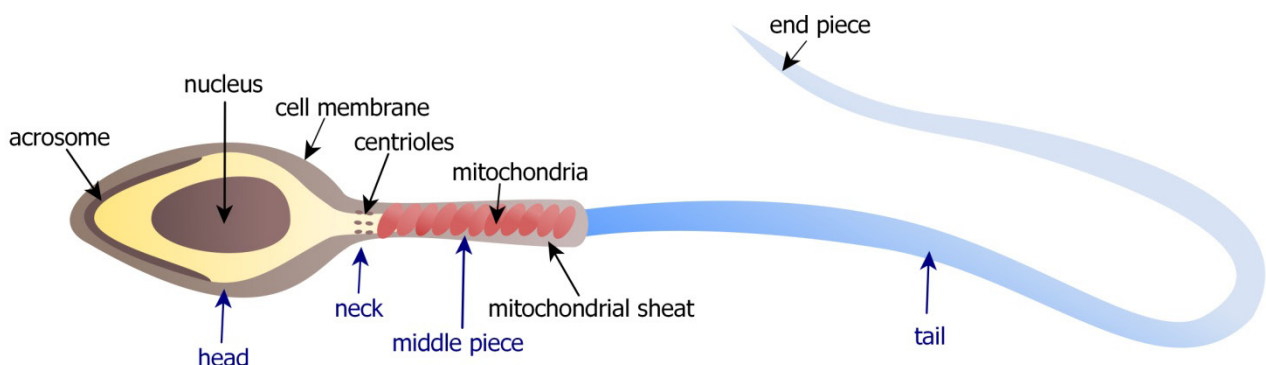




- **Morphology:**
  - Normal forms: >15-50%
- **DNA Fragmentation:**
  - <15% excellent
  - 15-24% good
  - 25-29% fair
  - >30% poor

Healthy sperm should ideally have a concentration of at least 100 million/ml. Motility should be at least 75%, and normal morphology rates of no less than 30% are considered acceptable for natural conception.

As well as having good volume, concentration, morphology & motility of sperm, fertility is also dependent on viscosity (the ability of the DNA to replicate without fragmenting) and energy production within the cell itself.



## CAUSES OF MALE FACTOR INFERTILITY

Of the known causes of male infertility, the most common (affecting some 66% of cases) is issues with production. The usual causes are factors such as heat, pressure, infections, genetic problems, exposure to drugs, chemicals, or radiation, age, testicular torsion, undescended testes, or previous vasectomy.



15% of cases are due to blockage of tubes (ejaculatory problems), and the third most common aetiology is anti-sperm antibodies which attack the sperm whilst in the uterus.

Less than 1% of infertility cases are due to sexual problems, which are usually secondary to illnesses such as diabetes, pelvic/prostate surgery, nerve damage from spinal cord injury, anti-depressants and anti-hypertension medication, infrequent intercourse, or age.

**Weight/obesity:** Due to the excess fat that surrounds the groin area in obese men the region can become overheated leading to a higher body temperature and lower sperm production. Fat also carries oestrogen and can cause an imbalance to the hormone levels.

**Infections:** Certain infections and sexually transmitted diseases can inhibit sperm production. Furthermore, some of the antibiotics prescribed to treat various infections can also be hazardous to sperm production.

**Inflammation:** an increasing problem in the genito-urinary tract of sub-fertile men who may be asymptomatic. It increases Free Radicals and oxidative stress which damages sperm. Inflammation is now considered one of the most common roots of many health problems including high cholesterol levels, hypertension, prostate disorders, and digestive disorders.

**Stress:** Because stress affects hormone levels, this can in turn affect the hormones responsible for sperm production, including lowering of testosterone (low or no libido).

**Nutrient Deficiencies:** Are you deficient in the dietary nutrients? These are naturally occurring in a good quality diet. If you're unwilling to change your diet, then you need to have dietary supplements. The following are known to have a positive effect on sperm quality and quantity: the B-vitamin group, omega-3 essential fatty acids, Vitamin E, Vitamin C, Selenium, Zinc, and Magnesium, and folic acid.

**Smoking tobacco:** Mainly due to the toxic chemicals found in cigarettes, but also depletes oxygen availability to the cells, and reduced blood flow.

**Caffeine drinks:** No more than 3 x weekly and preferably coffee (organic), not soft drinks containing caffeine. Energy drinks and soft drinks are full of substances which disrupt normal physiological function, and can produce unwanted side-effects to the nervous system.



### Excessive alcohol consumption:

- In the testes, alcohol can adversely affect the Leydig cells, which produce and secrete the hormone testosterone. Studies found that heavy alcohol consumption results in reduced testosterone levels in the blood.
- Alcohol also impairs the function of the testicular Sertoli cells that play an important role in sperm maturation.
- In the pituitary gland, alcohol can decrease the production, release, and/or activity of two hormones with critical reproductive functions, luteinizing hormone (LH) and follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH).
- Alcohol can interfere with hormone production in the hypothalamus.

*Taken from Mary Ann Emanuele, M.D., and Nicholas V. Emanuele, M.D. 1998, "Alcohol's effect on male Reproduction", Alcohol health & Research World, Vol.22 No.3, pp.195-201*

**Illicit drug usage such as marijuana and cocaine:** THC, the active ingredient in marijuana, decreases sperm production and affect sperm motility.

Long-term use of opiates can disrupt the signals that control testosterone production, which can cause low testosterone and decrease the quantity and quality of the sperm.

**Taking anabolic steroids:** These are testosterone-based hormones that work almost like a contraceptive by stopping the testicles produce testosterone therefore stopping sperm production.

**Too much heat in and around the testicular region:** Sperm needs to have a temperature that is 3°C below your normal body temperature in order to survive. This is why the testes are located externally to the body in the scrotum.

Conversely, a male's Basal Body Temperature (BBT – yes, you have one too!) needs to be ideally between 36.6 – 36.8°C. It is not unusual to find lowered BBT in men with decreased sperm quality, and yet scrotums that are too hot!



**Lack of Ejaculation:** Contrary to popular belief, having too much sex will not affect your sperm count. In fact, the opposite is true. Not being able to ejaculate enough can lower your sperm count. It is recommended that a man ejaculate once every 2-3 days.

**Age:** As a man ages, sperm quality decreases. This is typically seen in men over the age of 35.

**Sexual Lubricants:** A majority of over-the-counter lubricants can be detrimental to the production of sperm and should be avoided. As many of these are used in conjunction with condoms they contain a spermicide as an aid towards contraception.

**Varicocele:** This is a swollen vein inside the scrotum that inhibits or completely eliminates sperm production.

**Damaged Sperm Ducts:** The duct system is responsible for carrying sperm from the testicles to the penis. If this is damaged as a result of injury, surgery, or genetic inheritance then sperm count will be almost non-existent.

**AntiSperm Antibodies:** Sometimes men will produce antibodies that will attack their own sperm causing sperm count to drop.

**Toxicity:** Exposure to radiation, chemicals, and heavy metals can impair sperm production, affect the hormones involved in sperm production, and damage sperm cells directly. What are you exposed to at your work, shed, garage, workshop?

**Lack of sleep:** Sleep time is important for the maintenance of homeostasis and hormonal regulation by the brain, especially those which control the reproductive system.

## FERTILE LIFE METHOD

Most male infertility issues centre on poor sperm production or quality. And almost all aspects of sperm production can be improved using Fertile Life's treatment plan. We focus on a combination of lifestyle factors, dietary changes, nutritional supplements, herbal therapy and weekly acupuncture to increase sperm health. We will ask you to stop drinking, smoking and eating junk food. We ask for a small amount of time, not your whole life, and who knows you may feel so good that you will continue the changes



Many studies have reported acupuncture's positive effects on sperm concentration, motility, and morphology as well as testosterone levels and luteinizing hormone (in males it stimulates cells in the testes to produce testosterone).

Treatments for semen problems take a minimum of 3.5 months before you will see a change in sperm analysis. It takes time and patience. What is in the ejaculate today was generated three months ago. At Fertile Life, we will ask you to re-test your sperm after this period of time so that we can assess the changes. Semen analysis should be done with at least three days abstinence and no more than 5 days.

Treatment can be worked to coincide with an IVF cycle, with 2-3 months preparation time before the cycle being optimal.





## CHAPTER 11

# *Working together with assisted fertility*

*"You will find that there is always beauty and hope in even the most challenging circumstances."*

- Kirsten Wolfe

**W**estern Medicine offers many different treatment options for infertility at present, and the number of treatments available seem to increase each year, so it can be quite daunting to work out what (if any) is right for you.

The following treatments are discussed regularly with couples struggling to achieve and maintain a healthy pregnancy:

**Clomid** – Clomifene Citrate. This is taken in the form of a pill from day 2-5 of your cycle. The dosage can range from 50 -150mg. Clomid stimulates ovulation. It is usually the first line fertility drug given to women who are not ovulating. Possible side effects include mood swings, (I often describe it as imagining your PMS times 50!) hot flushes, insomnia, nausea and decreased cervical mucus with extended use.

**Metformin** – is used in the case of PCOS to help stimulate ovulation and is usually taken alongside Clomid. It is taken in pill form. Possible side effects include a metal taste in your mouth, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, itching and in rare cases hepatitis.



The next stage is then with a fertility specialist at an IVF centre.

**IUI** – Intrauterine Insemination used to be called artificial insemination. It involves the sperm being inserted directly into the uterus at the time of ovulation. It is often used if there is an issue with impotence, premature ejaculation, low sperm count or sperm motility. This can be done with or without fertility drug assistance depending on your specialist's recommendations.

**IVF** – In Vitro Fertilization involves collecting eggs from the female partner and sperm from the male partner and stimulating fertilization in a laboratory. The fertilized egg is then returned to the uterus. Many people believe there is one way to do IVF. But in fact there are many different protocols – long or short stimulation cycles, involving different drugs, different procedures, and different days of taking the embryo to day 2 compared to day 5. Talking to your Fertile Life practitioner can help you to become clear on different options to discuss with your specialist.

**ICSI** – Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection is a similar process to IVF, except that after egg collection a single sperm is injected into the egg. It is often used if there is low sperm motility/morphology or for IVF patients who have had no/low fertilization rates or low egg yield.

**Egg/Sperm donation** – also known as third-party reproduction, this is an option for women unable to produce their own eggs or men unable to produce their own sperm. Egg donation typically involves the process of IVF. Whereas sperm insemination can also be done through IUI or ICSI

The Fertile Life Method has been used regularly as a successful adjunct to all of these procedures to increase pregnancy outcomes.



## WORKING TOGETHER

The success rates for in-vitro or other medically assisted fertility treatments remain disheartening, yet when used in conjunction with a Chinese Medicine based treatment plan like Fertile Life there is a distinct increase in the likelihood of conception.

A meta-analysis of seven clinical trials in which acupuncture was used to support embryo transfer during IVF has concluded that it improves rates of pregnancy and live birth. Dutch and American researchers analysed results from seven clinical trials and showed that women who underwent acupuncture were 65% more likely to have a successful embryo transfer procedure and 91% more likely to have a live birth. (Effects of review and meta-analysis. BMJ. 2008 Mar 8;336(7643):545-9.)

Working together with your doctor, your Fertile Life Practitioner will assist in the preparation and duration of your IVF cycles. Each of our acupuncture IVF sessions work in conjunction with your individual IVF treatment and will be of benefit to your own wellbeing as well as that of your baby. IVF Acupuncture can be safely integrated with your own medical care, and will give you emotional balance and self-confidence, along with improved health and well-being throughout this intense time, so that you strengthen your chances of achieving success.

IVF and Chinese Medicine complement each other, and this is the motivating force behind our desire for integrated fertility care. IVF gets the sperm and egg together and it does this extremely well, but it offers little influence in how the cells divide and create life. This potential was set during the preconception period (months leading up to fertilisation).

Fertile Life supports this process by optimising the health potential of each partner, which includes the egg and sperm. We do not try to override this process but rather support it. IVF purposely overrides it in order to stimulate as many follicles as possible. Together, Fertile Life and IVF can be used to conceive a healthy baby. Firstly, Fertile Life will get your body into a healthy and balanced state, optimising your fertility with the goal of your egg/sperm reaching their fertility potential. This allows a receptive and nutrient rich uterine environment to nourish and support the developing baby through the 9 months of pregnancy. Then, IVF takes it's turn to bring egg and sperm together, and also to help pick the best "looking" embryo/blastocyst (sometimes testing with PGD etc. to make sure there are no chromosomal abnormalities – again to help choose the best potential for a



healthy baby), and then transfer that back into a welcoming uterine environment (using Acupuncture to help with blood flow and implantation).

Your Fertile Life Practitioner will assist you to maximise hormone balancing and cycle regulation, egg development and the healthy building of the endometrial lining. Regular Acupuncture also helps to reduce the effects of stress, as well as the side effects of any drug medications that you might be taking during your IVF cycle.

### **A basic approach – pre and post embryo acupuncture treatments:**

Acupuncture treatment should occur within 24hrs before and after embryo transfer.

For the treatment prior to transfer, Acupuncture is thought to increase the arterial blood flow to the uterus to nourish and support the endometrium, move Qi (energy flow) and blood, as well as create physical and mental relaxation for the woman prior to the transfer.

For the treatment after transfer, Acupuncture treatment is used to create a calm environment in the uterus and minimise any discomfort or cramping from the transfer procedure. Acupuncture points are selected that will support healthy implantation of the embryo and also improve the health of the blood flow and tissue of endometrium to support a pregnancy.

### **Beyond the basic approach – continual acupuncture after embryo transfer:**

We then recommend Acupuncture treatment 4 days after transfer to further assist implantation, then weekly until 12 weeks gestation. By continuing to stimulate blood flow to the blastocyst, Acupuncture helps to maintain the health and strength of the blastocyst-corpus-luteum relationship, thereby maintaining the proper level of progesterone. Then, after six weeks, your placenta takes over the role of secreting progesterone. Acupuncture stimulates blood flow to the placenta helping it to do its job of protecting and nourishing your growing baby. One major reason for miscarriage is the reduced blood flow to the placenta.

**It is important to note that the Fertile Life's preferred treatment method is to have acupuncture for 3 months prior to IVF or assisted fertility.**



### After embryo transfer:

#### DON'T

- ✗ Imbibe caffeine, tobacco, alcohol or drugs
- ✗ Heavy lifting: shopping, loads of washing
- ✗ Strenuous exercise, including housework
- ✗ Sun bathing, sauna, hot tubs, Jacuzzis, hot baths
- ✗ Bouncing activities, such as horseback riding
- ✗ Swimming
- ✗ Pushing a heavy trolley around the supermarket

#### DO

- ✓ Sexual intercourse in the morning before the transfer to set off hormone cascade
- ✓ Relax after the transfer, take some time out on the couch watching a movie or reading a book,
- ✓ Take time off work to relax for 3 to 5 days after transfer if possible don't rush back to a busy lifestyle





# FEMALE FERTILITY — THE DO'S AND DON'TS TO IMPROVE YOUR FERTILE HEALTH

*"Success is not final. Failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts."*

Do not underestimate the power that you have to take control of your fertile health. Small health and lifestyle changes will make a huge difference.

Please be proactive and follow these simple rules:

- **No smoking or use of recreational drugs** – (e.g., marijuana, cocaine, and ecstasy). These substances not only damage a woman's eggs, interfering with the fertilization and implantation process, but also cause the ovaries to age.
- **No alcohol** – a growing body of research has linked alcohol consumption with a decreased ability to conceive (not to mention the harm it can cause to a developing foetus). Alcohol alters oestrogen levels, which may interfere with egg implantation.
- **Avoid caffeine based products** – if you must have coffee, please have organic ground coffee beans and limit to 3 per week.
- **Drink 2 litres of water a day** – water is vitally important for every cell in the body. It is also essential in the production of good quality cervical fluid.
- **Reduce stress** – go for a walk, develop a regular yoga practice, breathe deeply, take a bubble bath, read a good book, get a massage/facial, practice meditation.
- **Relaxation & meditation** – can reduce stress, create balance in your mental health and help you maintain a positive outlook
- **Exercise each day** – lack of exercise can create hormone imbalance that can result in infertility. Moderate levels of exercise should be maintained.



- **Eat organic or local farmers market vegetables** – no soft drink, junk food, processed food or excessive dairy intake.
- **Minimise animal derived oestrogens** – predominantly found in dairy foods.
- **Take good quality preconception and pregnancy supplement** – getting pregnant and growing a new human being with your own reserves, requires a surplus of nutrients and energy.
- **Orgasm** – when a woman experiences an orgasm during sex, it helps to draw the semen into the cervix, thereby resulting in a higher number of sperm reaching the fallopian tube to wait for the egg.



# MALE FERTILITY — THE DO'S AND DON'TS TO IMPROVE YOUR FERTILE HEALTH

*"Let us not be content to wait and see what will happen,  
but give us the determination to make the right thing happen."*

– Horace Mann

Do not underestimate the power that you have to take control of your fertile health. Small health and lifestyle changes will make a huge difference.

Please be proactive and follow these simple rules:

- **Wear Boxer Shorts** – the testes require a slightly lower body temperature for successful sperm production, which is why they hang away from the body in the scrotum.
- **NO spa or hot tub** – we don't want to cook the sperm.
- **NO Laptops on your Lap or mobile phone in your pocket** – Men sitting with their legs together and working on a laptop computer can rise the temperature by up to 2.8 degrees celsius.
- **NO smoking or use of recreational drugs** – (e.g., marijuana, cocaine, and ecstasy) as they reduce sperm count and can cause abnormal sperm morphology (shape).
- **No alcohol** – as consumption is associated with a decrease in the percentage of normal sperm.
- **No coffee or caffeine drinks** – they impair the penetration rate of sperm
- **Eat organic or local farmer's market vegies**
- **Drink 2 litres of Water a day** – Staying well hydrated is one of the largest single factors which contributes to the volume of sperm a man excretes during orgasm. It is also crucial to stay well hydrated if you want to make sure your semen fluency,



texture, and consistency all stay within healthy parameters. If you are a heavy caffeine or alcohol drinker it's very easy to become dehydrated. Most people don't realize how detrimental the effects of these drugs are on hydration and sperm production.

- **Eat a healthy, well balanced diet** – dietary fats (eggs, avocados, olive oil etc.), protein and vegetables are the building blocks of healthy sperm.
- **Vitamin supplements** – if you aren't getting proper nutrition from your food, then you need to take supplements, including; Zinc, Selenium, Folic Acid/B complex, Vitamin C, Vitamin E, Magnesium, Omega-3 EFA (fish oil), Male multi-vitamin/mineral, Co-Enzyme Q10.
- **Ejaculate regularly** – every 2-3 days keep the production of sperm fresh. Not being able to ejaculate enough can lower your sperm count.
- **Have good sex** – need we say more?
- **Reduce stress** – start a relaxing project, walking, massage, acupuncture, a relaxing sport such as golf, swimming, surfing or fishing. Water sports also tend to keep the testes cool.
- **Avoid bike riding for long distances** – anything longer than 20 minutes at a time
- **Exercise** – 2.5 hours a week is considered optimal. Gentle, yet effective exercise that is appropriate for you. You do not need to do crazy marathons and cross-fit work-outs. Fitness does not necessarily equal good health. Find whatever you are congruent with – swimming, surfing, running, walking, yoga... Get moving.
- **Sleep** – sleep heals and regenerates the body. Eight hours at night is optimal, and small rests in the day (between 11am and 1pm) are also considered ideal.
- **Avoiding pesticides and chemicals** – where possible for example; hair dye, chemical household or industrial cleaners, garden sprays, and paint fumes, strong perfumes.
- **Become Well** – poor sperm quality is just one of many signs that you are not in good health. This is about vibrancy. Are you thriving in your life? Or surviving? What is your bliss, are you following it? If you look at yourself as a whole, then maybe you won't need all those other medications.
- **SUPPORT YOUR PARTNER** – she too will most likely need to make certain changes in her diet and lifestyle. Do you know what these are?



## CONCLUSION

*"There is no end. There is no beginning. There is only the infinite passion of life."*

**T**hank you for taking the time to read **Fertile Life's fertility guide**. I hope you have discovered new information that can help your fertility and can help you on your journey to understand your body more and know what the next step to take is. If you are one of our patients we look forward to working with you to help you achieve your goals. If you have download this book please feel free to email the clinic for a practitioner in your area or to answer any question you may have or to share with me your pregnancy after you have implemented the "Fertile Life" into your life.

I wish you every success on your journey.

Best wishes

*Kirsten Wolfe*

CREATOR OF FERTILE LIFE

[www.fertilelife.com.au](http://www.fertilelife.com.au)



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Kirsten Wolfe is the creator of The Fertile Life Method and director of Mornington Chinese Medicine. Her passion, training and experience over the past 20 years have given Kirsten a unique and privileged understanding of all facets of infertility, the human body and spirit.

As one of Australia's leading Fertility Acupuncturists, Kirsten approaches her patients with an open mind and a medically integrative perspective. She works

tirelessly to return them to optimum fertile health and collaborates with a patient's entire wellness team of physicians and health practitioners when necessary. Kirsten integrates traditional and complimentary care in order to effectively improve her patient's fertility outcomes and life-long health. Her expertise provides patients with comprehensive treatment and training programs to address their individual needs.

"My overall goal is to prepare the body, mind and spirit for conception, pregnancy and the birth of a beautiful new soul. All my patients are encouraged to actively participate in the body's healing process."

### QUALIFICATIONS AND LICENSES

Kirsten is currently completing a Master's of Science in Traditional Chinese Medicine from the University of Western Sydney specialising in Gynaecology and Fertility. She is a licensed Doctor of Acupuncture (AHPRA, AACMA), a certified Master NLP practitioner, Natural Fertility Awareness trainer, Energetic practitioner and Doula. Kirsten has completed extensive training with all the top worldwide Chinese Medicine Fertility experts giving her comprehensive understanding of Chinese Reproductive

### SERVICES PROVIDED

Kirsten's team offer an integrated natural treatment plan that includes Acupuncture, Chinese Medicine, NLP, BBT charting, nutritional and lifestyle recommendations. Kirsten provides optimum patient care both pre and postnatally alongside midwives and gynaecologists. The Fertile Life Method is designed to treat Reproductive & Women's health conditions such as infertility (natural and IVF) pregnancy, pre and post natal birth care.

"Within my treatments I use acupuncture, herbal medicine, NLP and natural fertility awareness, which include basal temperature and cervical mucus charting and most importantly learning the ebb and flow of your own cycle. This combination of therapies works with the body's natural vital energy (qi) which is inherent in all living things. This promotes the body's natural ability to heal itself, bringing one's organ system back into balance, thereby creating a healthy and fertile body!"



## PRACTITIONERS trained in THE FERTILE LIFE METHOD

Kirsten proudly endorses these practitioners that have trained under The Fertile Life Method.

### WA

Selina giannasi	Albany WA	<a href="http://albanyacupuncture.com.au">albanyacupuncture.com.au</a>
Sharon McVilly	Baldivis WA	<a href="http://peonytiger.com.au">peonytiger.com.au</a>
Nicole Trudgeon	Booragoon WA	<a href="http://acupunctureholisticmedicine.com.au">acupunctureholisticmedicine.com.au</a>
Diane Pierotti	Cotteslo WA	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/FrenchTouchAcupuncture/">www.facebook.com/FrenchTouchAcupuncture/</a>
Sandee Lippiatt	Margaret River WA	<a href="http://thehealingpointmr.com">thehealingpointmr.com</a>
Ann Heitman	Mindarie WA	<a href="http://holisticwellness.net.au">holisticwellness.net.au</a>
Holly Carruthers	Scarborough WA	<a href="http://scarboroughacupuncture.com.au">scarboroughacupuncture.com.au</a>
Sue Burleston	Spearwood WA	<a href="http://narture.com.au">narture.com.au</a>

### QLD

Tomoko Nakagiri	Browns Plains & Runcorn	<a href="http://naturaltherapypages.com.au/connect/premanaturaltherapy/service/18838">naturaltherapypages.com.au/connect/premanaturaltherapy/service/18838</a>
Vicki Balll	Buddina	<a href="http://honourhealth.com.au">honourhealth.com.au</a>
Tania Dickie	Bundeburg	<a href="http://nurtureacupuncture.com.au">nurtureacupuncture.com.au</a>
Jessica Hewett	Currumbin	<a href="http://nuwanaturalhealth.com.au">nuwanaturalhealth.com.au</a>
Amy Rhodes	Mapleton	<a href="http://maplestacupuncture.com.au">maplestacupuncture.com.au</a>
Rebecca Sweeny	Morayfield	<a href="http://vitalpointacupuncture.com.au">vitalpointacupuncture.com.au</a>

### VIC

Carrie Li	Box Hill	<a href="http://healingpond.com.au">healingpond.com.au</a>
Millicent Matthew	Caufiled	<a href="http://http://www.millicentolivia.com">http://www.millicentolivia.com</a>
Shelley Beer	Daylesford	<a href="http://tcmconsultancy.com">tcmconsultancy.com</a>
Catherine Kato	Eltham	<a href="http://elthamacupuncture.com.au">elthamacupuncture.com.au</a>
Emma Scriven	Healesville	<a href="http://healesvillechinesemedicine.com">healesvillechinesemedicine.com</a>
Justin Keane	Heathmont	<a href="http://heathmontchinesemedicine.com.au">heathmontchinesemedicine.com.au</a>
Jo Duddridge	Hoppers Crossing	<a href="http://hopperschiro.com.au">hopperschiro.com.au</a>
Chris Mills	Lilydale & Yarra Junction	<a href="http://naturaltherapypages.com.au/connect/mills/service/19747">naturaltherapypages.com.au/connect/mills/service/19747</a>
Julia Bartrop	Macleod	<a href="http://jbvitalitytcm.com">jbvitalitytcm.com</a>
Kim Clipstone	Macleod	<a href="http://renewacupunctureclinic.com.au">renewacupunctureclinic.com.au</a>
Anna McMullen	Mitcham	<a href="http://shentingacupuncture.com">shentingacupuncture.com</a>
Patricia Stoeckli	Melbourne	<a href="http://powerwellnessgroup.com">powerwellnessgroup.com</a>
Rachael West	Mt Evelyn	<a href="http://ravae.com.au">ravae.com.au</a>
Danielle Maguire	Preston	<a href="http://embraceacupuncture.com.au">embraceacupuncture.com.au</a>
Grace Jones	Richmond	<a href="http://acupuncturewithgrace.com.au">acupuncturewithgrace.com.au</a>
Nicole Pawley-Reddington	Richmond	<a href="http://soulpod.com.au">soulpod.com.au</a>
Hannah Sutton	Romsley	<a href="http://essenceofchinesemedicine.com.au">essenceofchinesemedicine.com.au</a>
Fiona Conway	St Kilda	<a href="http://solarishealth.com.au">solarishealth.com.au</a>
Peter Rutty	South Yarra	<a href="http://peterrutty.com.au">peterrutty.com.au</a>
Anthody Holding	Whittlesea	<a href="http://wcmclinic.weebly.com">wcmclinic.weebly.com</a>
Danielle Slade	Woodend	<a href="http://zenkai.com.au">zenkai.com.au</a>

### NSW

Renee Gould	Camden	<a href="http://peacebypieceholistichealing.com.au">peacebypieceholistichealing.com.au</a>
Leoni Zakarias	Lilydale & Clifton Hill	<a href="http://jinghealthcare.com">jinghealthcare.com</a>
Emma Quine	Marrickville	<a href="http://emmaquine.com">emmaquine.com</a>
Kate Levett	New Port & St Lenards	<a href="http://restorewellness.com.au">restorewellness.com.au</a>
Isabelle Dickson	Waitara	<a href="http://taoofhealth.com.au">taoofhealth.com.au</a>
Chloe Player	Warriewood	<a href="http://nbip.com.au">nbip.com.au</a>
Yasmin Hart	Wyong	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/pg/hartnsoulctcm">https://www.facebook.com/pg/hartnsoulctcm</a>

### NZ

Nicola Douglas	New Plymouth	<a href="http://nicdouglasacupuncture.com">nicdouglasacupuncture.com</a>
Ada Sobieszczuk	Titirangi	<a href="http://acuada.co.nz">acuada.co.nz</a>



Want to know more?

- Did you know our clinic offers **Telehealth** consults?  
Contact us at [www.fertilelife.com.au](http://www.fertilelife.com.au)
- We can help you become clear on your next steps to becoming fertile.
- Our clinic operates out of Mornington Chinese Medicine, you can make a booking to see us 6 days a week, Give us a call on 0359736886 or [www.fertilelife.com.au](http://www.fertilelife.com.au)