

Wellness

REVIEW

Baby Making *MANual*

Happier, Healthier Dad = Happier, Healthier Babies

Men's health is often overlooked when couples are trying to conceive, yet suboptimal male health can negatively impact fertility. Did you know that making poor diet and lifestyle choices prior to conception can also cause changes to the DNA (genes) passed on to your children that may have lasting detrimental effects on their health? Supporting your health and wellbeing as a dad-to-be will not only help you feel great, but also play an important role in creating a healthy and happy baby.

Are You Doing Right by Your Body and Your Future Baby?

The following diet and lifestyle factors can negatively affect wellbeing, sperm health and fertility, and your children's health. By making healthier choices now, you set your kids up for better health for life.

- Smoking and alcohol consumption are associated with higher numbers of abnormal sperm, and may even increase the risk of serious health conditions that affect a baby's brain and heart.
- Stress can alter sperm DNA in a way that impacts children's behaviour, reducing their ability to cope with stress and making them more easily anxious or fearful.
- Being overweight has a significant impact on sperm quality and on the child's metabolic health. Specifically, overweight fathers are more likely to produce overweight children who may be at higher risk of type 2 diabetes as adults.
- Exposure to environmental toxins (chemicals and heavy metals) can lead to increased levels of free radicals which can damage sperms, potentially reducing the chances of conceiving a healthy child.



Nutrients for a Healthy Baby

Poor nutritional intake and consuming excess processed foods, soft drinks, and sugary foods is linked with compromised sperm quality. In addition, a diet deficient in key nutrients can increase the risk of adverse health outcomes for children. For example, folate deficiency in mum or dad can increase the risk of neural tube defects, which are abnormalities of the brain and spinal cord.

Making sure you get plenty of important nutrients in the lead up to conception helps to improve sperm quality and the health of your child. These include:

- Antioxidants: Zinc, selenium, and vitamins C and E protect sperm DNA from damage by free radicals, improving fertility and ensuring healthy genes are passed onto the next generation.
- Folate: Essential for sperm quality and responsible for switching off unhealthy genes, preventing them from negatively affecting your child's health.
- Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10): Protects sperm from free radicals and consequent DNA damage, which may reduce the risk of miscarriage and birth defects.
- Omega-3s: Essential fatty acids (found in both fish and algal oil) prevent sperm damage and improve sperm count, which contributes to healthier babies.

Tips for Happier, Healthier Dads and Babies

The following diet and lifestyle tips can support male health and improve the health of your baby:

- Adopt the Mediterranean diet, which is high in vegetables, lean meat, fish and good fats. This diet is rich in antioxidants and the nutrients necessary for healthy sperm.
- Exercise regularly to reduce stress and maintain a healthy weight. Exercising as little as two hours per week can improve your fertility, however aim for at least 30 minutes per day if possible.
- Reduce environmental exposure to chemicals, heavy metals and other toxins by eating organic foods (especially meats) and drinking filtered water whenever possible.

Take Charge

Taking charge of your physical, mental and emotional health will not only make you feel great, but will help increase your chances of creating a happy, healthy baby.

Talk to your Practitioner for a personalised action plan today!