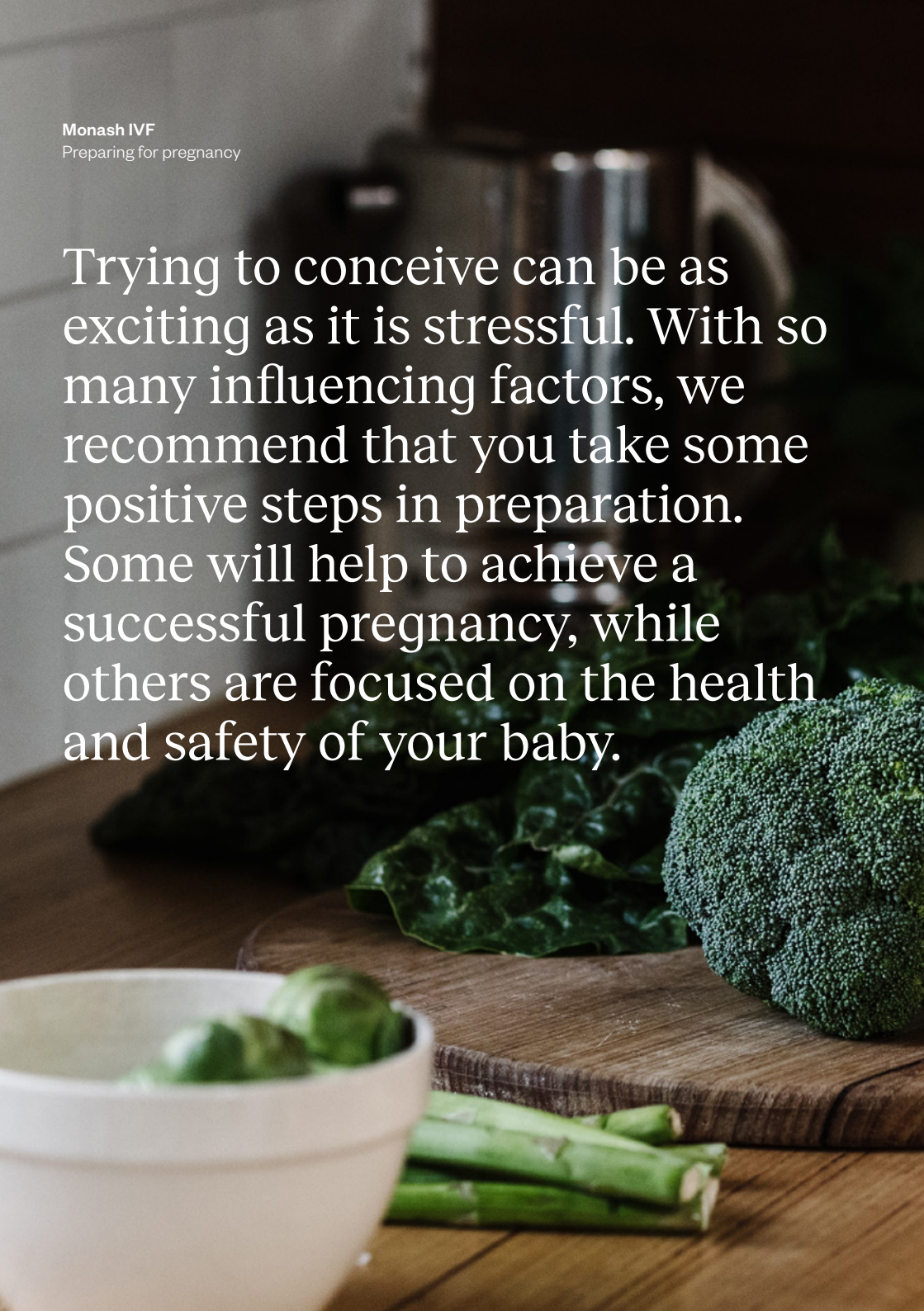




Preparing  
for pregnancy.

Trying to conceive can be as exciting as it is stressful. With so many influencing factors, we recommend that you take some positive steps in preparation. Some will help to achieve a successful pregnancy, while others are focused on the health and safety of your baby.





## Fertility Health Check

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We recommend that you are proactive with your reproductive health, and manage and assess your fertility through a fertility health check.

A fertility specialist will run a series of tests to check your reproductive health. They will also assess your overall health and lifestyle, and identify any changes which may be required to improve your fertility. They may identify potential fertility issues which may need to be treated before you can fall pregnant. The earlier these issues can be identified, the better.

## Healthy Diet

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### A healthy diet includes:

- Fresh fruit and vegetables each day
- Good quality protein, such as lean meat, fish, eggs or pulses, like beans or lentils
- Complex carbohydrates, like whole grains
- Plenty of calcium (preferably in the form of low fat dairy products)
- Avoid excessive additives such as colours, flavours and preservatives
- Healthy fats, like olive oil

A fish oil or flaxseed oil supplement can be a good addition to your diet for both fertility and pregnancy, and may reduce your risk of post-natal depression.

## Weight

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A healthy body weight is important for both men and women when trying for a baby. You can calculate your Body Mass Index (BMI) as your weight (in kilograms) divided by the square of your height (in metres) or  $BMI = \text{Kg}/\text{M}^2$ . Ideally, your BMI should be between 20 and 25.

Obesity increases the risk of heart conditions, diabetes and hormonal imbalances, which can lead to infertility. Being underweight can lead to irregular or long period cycles, which can impact fertility.

Please see a dietitian for expert individualised advice. Rapid or extreme weight loss or weight gain is not good for your fertility, so consult your GP about the best options for you.

## Fitness

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Women will benefit from being fit prior to pregnancy. Men should also aspire to a reasonable level of fitness, as studies show that the health of a male partner or sperm donor at the time of conception can impact the future health of the child.

You can start improving your fitness by building up to 45 minutes brisk walking 5 days per week. If you are unfit, start with 10 minutes twice a week at a moderate pace, and each week increase the time and frequency of your exercise.

It is best to limit high impact or high intensity exercise to no more than 4 hours per week.

## Smoking

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Smoking can affect the fertility of both males and females, and can cause erectile dysfunction and increased DNA damage to sperm and eggs. We recommend you stop smoking to reduce the risk of miscarriage, and improve your long term health as a parent. Call 1800 QUIT for help quitting smoking.

## Alcohol

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The National Health and Medical Research Council recommends that women who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy should not drink alcohol.

Men should keep to current safe drinking guidelines: No more than 10 standard drinks per week and no more than 4 standard drinks in one day.

## Caffeine

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It is recommended that men and women aim for less than 200mg of caffeine a day, which equals a maximum of one to two coffees or glasses of cola/energy drinks, or two to three teas, and not too much chocolate either!

If you need to cut down, do so slowly to reduce the impact of withdrawal symptoms.

## Drugs

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Certain drugs adversely affect male fertility, including:

- Recreational / illicit drugs
- Anti-hypertensives
- Psychotherapeutic agents
- Chemotherapeutic agents
- Hormones (anabolic steroids)
- Antibiotics

### Effects can include:

- Direct gonadotoxic effects which means direct harm to the testes
- Alterations in the production and release of hormones, which can negatively impact male fertility
- Erectile dysfunction
- Direct effects on libido

Recreational drugs can also impact female hormone levels.

It is recommended for women to check the safety of their medications in pregnancy with their prescribing doctor.

## Heat

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It is best to avoid excessive heat from saunas or spas when trying to conceive and during pregnancy. Men should also avoid situations where their scrotal area is unable to keep cooler than the rest of the body.

## Folate/Folic Acid

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Folate supplementation is recommended at least one month prior to pregnancy and for three months into the pregnancy.

Folate reduces the chance of the baby having a defect in the neural tube, such as spina bifida. It can be taken alone or in combination with other pre-pregnancy supplements.

## Rubella And Varicella

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A blood test can show if you are immune to rubella. If not, immunisation will be recommended.

A blood test can also check your immunity to varicella. If not, immunisation will be recommended.

## Cervical Screening Test

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Update your cervical screening test if it is nearly due. It is better to have one a bit early than be due in the middle of a pregnancy and find out that you have an abnormality on your cervical screening test that may need attention.

## Sexually Transmitted Infections

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Sexually transmitted infections can impact your fertility.

### Chlamydia:

Chlamydia is a common sexually transmitted infection (STI) caused by the bacterium, chlamydia trachomatis.

In women, untreated infection can spread into the fallopian tubes and cause the tubes to become blocked. They can also develop scar tissue around the fallopian tubes that makes it more difficult for the tube to "pick up" the egg at the time of ovulation. This can lead to infertility and an increased risk of an ectopic (tubal) pregnancy.

In men, if the infection is left undetected and untreated it can cause an infection in the ducts of the testicles where sperm mature, which can ultimately lead to infertility.

### Other infections that may impact fertility include:

- Gonorrhoea
- Syphilis
- HPV
- Herpes
- Genital warts
- HIV
- Hepatitis B

## Reproductive Carrier Screening

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RANZCOG guidelines recommend that anyone trying to conceive completes reproductive carrier screening prior to pregnancy to identify genetic factors which may impact fertility or the health of your child.

If you discover you are a carrier for a genetic condition, you can explore your options. Speak with your fertility specialist about your options.

## Emotional Health

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Maintaining a positive state of mind can improve your health and wellbeing, and your chances of a successful pregnancy. At Monash IVF we provide counsellors for individuals and couples. We know that your fertility journey can be emotionally challenging, so we are here to support you. Our counsellors have extensive therapeutic experience and have specialised skills and knowledge in the field of infertility.

## When To Seek Assistance

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- Solo parents, LGBTIQ people and people with known genetically inherited conditions in their family should see a fertility specialist when they are ready to have a child, to discuss their options.
- For women aged 35 or over in a heterosexual relationship, we recommend that you seek expert fertility advice if you have not been successful falling pregnant naturally after six months.
- For women under 35 years, we recommend that you seek expert fertility advice if you have menstrual problems or are not pregnant after 12 months of trying to fall pregnant naturally.

## Fertility And Phases Of The Menstrual Cycle

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Women can find out when they are ovulating by using temperature charts, blood tests, urine ovulation predictor kits and saliva kits. However, it is recommended you speak to your fertility specialist before using them.

To determine your cycle length, simply count the days from the first day of your period up to, but not including, the first day of your next period.

The average menstrual cycle lasts about 28 days, but it is perfectly normal for your cycle to last anywhere from 24 to 34 days.

On average, ovulation occurs 14 days before the start of your period. However, it is normal for a woman to ovulate anywhere from 12 to 18 days before menstruation.

## Donor Options

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Depending on your relationship status, you may already know you need fertility treatment to start a family. Monash IVF have access to donor sperm, donor eggs and donor embryos and we also have a surrogacy team who can assist you in your planning.

## Infertility

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Some people may find it challenging to conceive. If this is the case, you may be experiencing infertility.

Infertility is defined as the inability to carry a pregnancy to a live birth. You may be aware that:

- 30% of infertility is due to female factors alone
- 30% of infertility is due to male factors alone
- 30% of infertility is due to both female and male factors
- Up to 10% of infertility remains unexplained

## The Effects Of Age On Fertility

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### Both men and women have a reproductive lifespan.

Women are born with all the eggs they will ever produce, and egg quality and number decreases with age. Female fertility declines slightly at 30 years and declines significantly around 37 to 38 years of age. By the time a woman is 40 years old her fertility is a quarter of what it was when she was 30. The miscarriage rate increases with age. One in seven pregnancies will miscarry in women aged less than 25 years old. One in two pregnancies will miscarry in women at 40 years of age.

Male infertility accounts for approximately 30% of all cases treated at Monash IVF. Just like women, men also have a "biological clock". Studies have shown that IVF success rates halve by the time a man turns 50 irrespective of their female partner's age.

www.monashivf.com  
Email: info@monashivf.com  
Telephone: 1800 628 533 (freecall)

## Victoria

### Monash IVF Richmond

Epworth Richmond  
Level 7, Bridge Road Tower 89  
Bridge Road  
Richmond 3121  
T: 03 9420 8200

### Monash IVF Clayton

Monash Surgical  
Private Hospital Suite 1, 252-256  
Clayton Road Clayton 3168  
T: 03 9590 8300

### Monash IVF Sunshine

Sunshine Private  
Ground Floor, Suite 1  
147 Furlong Road  
St Albans 3021  
T: 03 9420 8292

### Monash IVF Bendigo

Bendigo Day Surgery  
1 Chum Street Bendigo 3550  
T: 03 9590 8300

### Monash IVF Geelong

Geelong Private  
Medical Centre Level 2,  
73-79 Little Ryrie Street  
Geelong 3220  
T: 03 5222 8599

### Monash IVF Sale

Central Gippsland  
Health Service  
155 Guthridge Parade  
Sale 3850  
T: 03 9420 8200

### Monash IVF Mildura

190-192 Ontario Avenue  
Mildura 3500  
T: 03 9420 8200

## New South Wales

### Monash IVF Sydney CBD

Level 10, 207 Kent St  
Sydney 2000  
T: 02 9154 1130

### Monash IVF Bondi Junction

Level 26, Westfield Tower 1  
520 Oxford Street  
Bondi Junction 2022  
T: 02 9389 1177

### Monash IVF Parramatta

Level 2, 1 Fennell Street  
Parramatta 2151  
T: 02 9890 9022

### Monash IVF Penrith

Nepean Specialist Centre  
Ground Floor,  
1a Barber Avenue  
Kingswood 2747  
T: 02 9154 1155

### Monash IVF Campbelltown

Campbelltown  
Private Hospital  
Suite 3-4, Level 1  
42 Parkside Crescent  
Campbelltown 2560  
T: 02 9890 9022

### Monash IVF Albury

13 Yalandra Court  
West Albury 2640  
T: 1800 628 533

### Monash IVF Wagga Wagga

Wagga Wagga  
Specialist Medical Centre  
Suite 11, 325-327  
Edward Street  
Wagga Wagga 2650  
T: 1800 628 533

## Queensland

### Monash IVF Auchenflower

The Wesley Hospital  
Level B2 Moorlands Wing  
451 Coronation Drive  
Auchenflower 4066  
T: 07 3069 9600

### Monash IVF Gold Coast

Level 3, 2 Short Street  
Southport 4215  
T: 07 5519 1600

### Monash IVF Rockhampton

Hillcrest Specialist Centre  
Suite 2, Talford Lane  
Rockhampton 4700  
T: 07 4921 2022

### Monash IVF Townsville

10 Martinez Avenue  
West End  
Townsville 4810  
T: 07 4779 0389