

A woman with her hair in a ponytail, wearing a white t-shirt and dark leggings, is performing a yoga pose (Warrior II) in a room with a wooden wall and a window. She has her arms extended horizontally to the sides and her legs in a wide stance. The text "Top tips to boost your fertility." is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Top tips to boost
your fertility.

Why is fertility health important?
Research shows that your health has an impact on both chances of conception, and the future health of your child. Knowing how to optimise your fertility can be overwhelming, so we have simplified it down to these tips.



01

Quit smoking



Quitting smoking can increase your chances of falling pregnant and having a healthy baby.

Smoking can have a major impact on egg and sperm health.

- It can affect sperm morphology and motility.
- It can increase DNA damage to both sperm and eggs which may cause mutations, induce miscarriage or impair the health and future fertility of your child.

The good news is the effects of smoking on fertility can be reversed.

Speak with your primary health care professional or pharmacist about options which could assist you to quit smoking.

Call 13 QUIT.

02

Maintain a healthy body weight



Being overweight or underweight may impact fertility.

Being overweight or underweight can cause hormonal imbalances that trigger problems with ovulation and the menstrual cycle.

Men's fertility may also be negatively affected if they are overweight or underweight. Aim to maintain a healthy body weight to optimise your fertility.

An ideal body mass index (BMI) is 18.5-24.9. To calculate your BMI, divide your weight in kilograms by your height in meters squared.

Even a 10 percent decrease in bodyweight can have a positive impact on your fertility.

Achieving your target weight will also minimise complications that can occur throughout pregnancy.

03

Hydrate



Our bodies are about 60 percent water, so being dehydrated can have a huge impact on fertility.

Dehydration can affect cervical mucus. The more hydrated your cervical mucus is, the easier sperm can travel through it.

Dehydration can also impact sperm count and sperm quality.

We need between 2.7 litres and 3.7 litres of water per day to stay hydrated. A good rule of thumb is to aim to drink 8 tall glasses of water per day.

04

Exercise



Moderate exercise, even in the absence of weight loss, has been shown to improve the likelihood of conception.

Exercise can help you:

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Strengthen muscle
- Increase circulation
- Reduce stress
- Prevent anxiety

Regular moderate exercise, at least 30 minutes three times per week, will help keep you fit and healthy.

Great exercises for those trying to fall pregnant include:

- Brisk walking
- Swimming
- Yoga
- Aerobics
- Bike riding
- Jogging

Remember not to overdo it; extreme exercise may affect your fertility adversely. Speak to your GP or Fertility Specialist about what is best for you.

05

Take a prenatal vitamin



The National Health and Medical Research Council, Australia's leading expert body which promotes the development of public and individual health standards, recommends that to reduce the risk of neural tube defects in babies, women should take 500 micrograms folic acid (also known as folate) and 150 micrograms of iodine per day for a minimum of one month before falling pregnant and for the first three months of pregnancy.

See a Fertility Specialist for a Fertility Health Check and personalised advice about which pre-conception vitamins and minerals will best improve your chances of conceiving.

06

Healthy diet



A healthy diet can provide you with essential vitamins and minerals which can assist in conception.

A healthy diet includes:

- A range of fresh fruit and vegetables.
- Good quality protein, such as lean meat, fish, eggs and pulses (e.g. beans, lentils).
- Complex carbohydrates and whole grains.
- Calcium, preferably in the form of low fat dairy products.

It is best to avoid excessive additives such as artificial colours, flavours and preservatives. It is also recommended to keep to a relatively low fat diet and include mainly healthy fats such as olive oil or avocado.

07

Avoid alcohol



According to National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) guidelines, people who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy should not drink alcohol.

For male partners, NHMRC recommends drinking no more than ten standard drinks per week and no more than four standard drinks on any one day. Alcohol can cause impotence and damage sperm quality, so aim to keep to current safe drinking guidelines.

08

Minimise caffeine



Caffeine is a stimulant found in coffee, tea, energy drinks, soft drinks and chocolate.

Studies have indicated that those who consume large amounts of caffeine may take longer to conceive or have a higher risk of miscarriage.

Aim for less than 200mg of caffeine a day, which equals a maximum of one to two coffees or two to three cups of tea.

If you need to reduce your caffeine intake per day, do so slowly to reduce the impact of withdrawal symptoms.

09

Avoid recreational drugs



If you're trying to conceive, it is not the time to take recreational drugs.

Sperm and egg quality and egg production can be negatively impacted by recreational drugs.

In particular, performance enhancing drugs such as testosterone, steroids or insulin can significantly decrease sperm production.

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Sleep



Our bodies need good quality sleep to function properly.

While we sleep our bodies repair, rejuvenate and regulate our hormones, which is important when you are trying to conceive.

The Australian Psychological Association recommends the following to improve your sleep:

- Avoid using electronics such as the computer, television or smart phone or at least one to two hours before going to bed.
- Avoid coffee, tea and other caffeinated drinks during the afternoon and evening.
- Make sure your bedroom is quiet, dark and a comfortable temperature - not too cold or too warm.
- Perform tasks that require you to focus and concentrate during the day rather than in the evening.
- Stick to a sleep schedule. Get up at the same time each day, even if you had trouble sleeping the night before.
- Practice relaxation or mindfulness techniques just before going to bed.
- Exercise regularly, but avoid exercising immediately before bed.

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Use an ovulation calendar



One of the trickiest things about falling pregnant is knowing exactly when you are ovulating, especially if you have not been tracking your menstrual cycle.

Start by tracking when your period begins on a calendar (or via the many apps available).

Day 1 will be the first day of your full flow period and the last day will be the day before your next period begins.

The average menstrual cycle is 28 days however it is perfectly normal for a cycle to be between 24 – 34 days.

Once you know how many days your shortest cycle is (for example 28 days) and how many days your longest cycle is (for example 30 days) then subtract 14 from these numbers ($28 - 14 = 14$ and $30 - 14 = 16$). The earliest you are likely to ovulate is on day 14 and the latest you are likely to ovulate is on day 16 of your cycle.

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Have sex regularly near ovulation



For heterosexual couples, it is recommended that you have sex regularly as your ovulation approaches. This dramatically increases the likelihood of conception.

The fertile window starts four days before you ovulate, so try to have sex at least every second day (or every day if that suits you) in the four days leading up to and including ovulation.

13

Limit your stress



Maintaining a positive mindset can improve your well-being and your chance of a successful pregnancy.

In our busy lives an element of stress is inevitable, but it is how we deal with our stress that matters.

If you have a stressful job or have some stressful situations coming up, try and unwind as much as possible. Meditation, yoga and active hobbies are all useful tactics.

Trying to conceive can also add another layer of stress. Try not to focus on falling pregnant and let your mind relax as best as it can.

Excessive stress can sometimes pause or delay your ovulation, or even cause your cycle to become somewhat irregular.

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Check your medications with your health care professional



While some medications are harmless, there are some medications that can reduce your chances of becoming pregnant. This also includes over the counter medications.

To be safe, be sure to check your medications with your health care professional. Similarly, let your pharmacist know you are trying to conceive and ask them for the best alternative.

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Get a preconception health check



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

Your Fertility Specialist can run a series of tests to check your reproductive health. These tests can help you make positive lifestyle changes to improve your fertility. They may also identify potential fertility issues which may need to be treated before you can fall pregnant. The earlier any issues can be identified, the better.

During a preconception health check your fertility specialist may speak to you about:

- diet
- exercise recommendations
- any smoking / alcohol / illicit drug use
- medical history
- genetic screening
- a breast check and cervical screening test (if applicable)
- screening for STIs and other infectious diseases
- Investigation if required for endometriosis or PCOS

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Reproductive carrier screening



The Royal Australia and New Zealand College of Obstetrics and Gynaecologists recommends that anyone considering pregnancy undergo reproductive carrier screening.

Reproductive carrier screening tests healthy adults to see if they have an increased chance of having a child with a serious genetic condition.

If you screen positive as a carrier for a genetic condition, it means there is a 1 in 4 risk of you having an affected child (with some exceptions).

We can design an embryo screening test for every condition screened. This will significantly reduce the chance that your child will have a serious genetic condition.

Speak to a Fertility Specialist about your options for reproductive carrier screening.

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See a Fertility Specialist



If you are an LGBTIQ+ couple, considering solo parenting, or have a family history of genetically inherited conditions, we recommend you see a fertility specialist to discuss your fertility treatment options.

If you are a heterosexual couple, we recommend you see a fertility specialist:

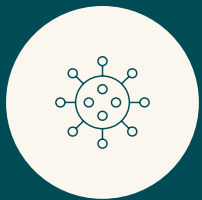
- If you are under 35 years old and have not fall pregnant after 12 months of regular unprotected sex.
- If you are aged 35 or older, and have not fallen pregnant after 6 months of regular unprotected sex.

We also recommend you see a fertility specialist if either partner, regardless of age, has been diagnosed or treated for:

- irregular or absent periods
- PCOS or endometriosis
- tubal damage (or previous tubal ligation surgery)
- recurrent miscarriage
- premature menopause
- low sperm count
- poor sperm shape (morphology) or movement (motility)
- antisperm antibodies
- ejaculatory concerns
- absence of sperm (azoospermia)
- issues from a prior vasectomy

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COVID-19 and pregnancy



The Fertility Society of Australia's statement (dated March 19, 2020) says that there is no evidence to recommend contraception or cessation of attempts to conceive, either unassisted or assisted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

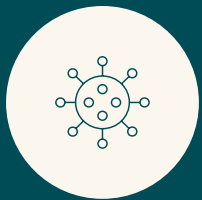
According to the Royal Australian New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologist's statement (dated 23 March 2020), pregnant women do not appear to be more severely unwell if they develop COVID-19 than the general population. A large majority of pregnant women will experience only mild or moderate cold/flu like symptoms with the virus.

For those trying to conceive, or who are in early pregnancy, there is no evidence to suggest an increased risk of miscarriage with COVID-19.

Worldwide, there have only been two confirmed reports of COVID-19 passing from the mother to the developing baby in pregnancy (vertical transmission) and both babies recovered. There is no evidence that the virus will cause abnormalities in your baby.

19

COVID-19 and fevers



If you develop a fever due to COVID-19 or another infection, it is important that you take paracetamol (Panadol) to minimise any increase in body temperature as a result of a fever.

Paracetamol (Panadol) is entirely safe in pregnancy and does not harm the body's ability to fight the Coronavirus. It is the first line treatment if you were to develop a fever, irrespective of whether you have had a formal medical diagnosis of Coronavirus.

It is also important to maintain adequate hydration (fluids) during times of fever.

Please do not use ibuprofen (Nurofen) or related NSAIDs to manage fever as we generally avoid these in IVF and some medical reports suggest these types of drugs may limit your ability to fight the Coronavirus. A high fever, common with severe Coronavirus infections, can negatively impact sperm quality. If sperm quality was low before COVID-19 infection, it may be best to delay trying to conceive for 2 months (as sperm take 70 days to be produced) to allow sperm quality to improve and recheck again with a semen analysis.

At present there is no evidence that the Coronavirus adversely affects egg quality.

Contact Us

We are always here to help you on your fertility journey.

Speak with an experienced fertility nurse today for a free chat about your options.

Telehealth consultations with our fertility specialists are available. Visit monashivf.com to book an appointment.

Phone: 1800 674 792 (free call)

Email: enquiries@monashivf.com

