

Nutrition and Fitness for Fertility

In a healthy body, weight loss is a natural by-product

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BMI & FERTILITY TREATMENT - A NHS REQUIREMENT & DOES IT IMPROVE YOUR CHANCES?

My Fertility Specialist Magazine is delighted to bring you a regular column on Nutrition and Fitness for Fertility - for both men and women, by Mark Whitney and Gareth Zeal, both experts in the field of nutrition.

We all know that obesity can lead to long-term chronic health problems, but did you know that it may also lead to infertility? With regards to the NHS and fertility treatment, the right Body Mass Index (BMI) is a requirement to get access to treatment. The NHS requires a BMI figure between 19 and 24.

The BMI is a number calculated from height and weight that is used to determine whether a person is underweight, normal weight, overweight, or obese¹. This is the link to the NHS' BMI calculator - <http://www.nhs.uk/Tools/Pages/Healthyweightcalculator.aspx> Research has shown, not only a link between obesity and anovulation (when eggs are not released from the ovaries), but there is an infertility risk for obese women - even if they ovulate regularly.

The journal 'Human Reproduction', published a study which followed 3,029² couples having trouble

conceiving after a year or more of trying. They found:

- Women with a BMI of 35 were 26% less likely to naturally conceive on their own, compared to overweight to normal weight women
- Women with a BMI of 40 or more, were 46% less likely to conceive on their own
- Obesity in men lowers testosterone levels. Chronic low levels of testosterone affect how the testes function

Another study, compiling data on 7,327 women in 2010 stated "Obesity was associated with reduced fecundity (fertility) for all subgroups of women and persisted for women with regular cycles³."

It is well established that being overweight or obese will impact on your fertility, in both men and women significantly⁴. So, what can you do to get the ideal BMI?

Top tips

Increase Exercise:

For most, weight gain is not down to any 'disease' but more a result of our modern lifestyles. Sedentary jobs, food on the go, high stress (increases fat deposits) all work against us. Exercise

can take many forms and does not always have to take place in a gym. Why not..... run around the house, up and down the stairs, wear ankle weights around the office, go for a walk at lunchtime, and so on. Getting moving is the best way to bring down your weight!

Eat Better:

Examine the Glycemic Index (GI) and Glycemic Load for low sugar, healthy foods! The Glycemic Index of foods shows how quickly the sugar elements of food get transported to the blood stream. The quicker this occurs, the worse the food is for blood sugar control and weight control. Look for low GI foods and food combinations.

Fats:

Not all fats are bad and in fact, most of our fats are actually quite beneficial. We all know about Omega 3, a polyunsaturated FATTY Acid. Omega 6, 7 & 9 are the same, good fats. Bad fats, such as saturated fats and trans fats are guilty of the unhealthy things that all fats have been blamed for — weight gain, clogged arteries and so forth. But good fats such as the monounsaturated fats (olive oil, avocado), polyunsaturated fats (nuts, seeds, leafy greens) and omega-3s (oily fish, nuts, seeds, good beef) have the opposite effect.

References

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