



Our diet, our nutrition, our fertility. Is there a link?

Yes, there is, but of course a nutritionist is going to say this.

So what does the science actually tell us about nutrition and fertility? Harvard performed a study that showed an 80% decrease in infertility with improvements in diet and lifestyle. Women who followed a combination of five or more lifestyle factors, including changing specific aspects of their diets, experienced more than 80 percent less relative risk of infertility due to ovulatory disorders, compared to women who engaged in none of the factors, according to a paper published in *Obstetrics & Gynecology*, examining over 17,000 women. What this shows is that what we eat and drink, coupled with how we live our lives can improve or impair our fertility.

Debunking some myths:

Organic -vs- Non-Organic: I think this debate will rumble on forever. Organic foods can only be more nutritious than non-organic if grown in more-fertile soil. However, in a recent study by the European Union, of the 37 pesticides tested, 23 were found clearly to be endocrine/hormone disrupting. Pesticides, fungicides etc can have a negative impact on our hormonal process! Finally, these chemicals have been shown to interfere with the nutrients developing within the food, which will impact on the development of sperm cells and egg cells.

Superfoods: Are they super? To frame it this way, superfoods will not correct any particular issue themselves. Will Acai berry make you lose weight? Will Chia Seeds provide you with all of your Omega 3? Short answer is no. They are called superfoods because they generally have more nutrients per 100g than another food. Our advice at Pillar; the body needs X amount of nutrients per day. If we do not hit these doses, we will not perform as well as we could. Eat a wide variety of nutrient dense foods to increase your nutritional intake and avoid foodstuffs that are limited. A simple example, instead of eating buckets of kale, eat spinach, rocket, red and green lettuce leaf and romaine lettuce and some kale.

Nutrient Deficiencies impair sperm creation, egg development, ovulation and hormonal profiles. Are foods as healthy as they once were? It has been shown in so many instances, by the British Government Food testing laboratories (McCance & Widdowson), that the nutrient values of many of our current foods have declined considerably, sometimes up to 50% in the case of magnesium, and in excess of 20% in many vitamins and minerals in foods generally over the last 50-60 years. In a recent study by the National Food Survey in the UK, 90% of study participants were deficient in zinc. According to 'The Centre for Disease and Control's Assisted Reproductive Technology Report,' low levels of zinc have been directly linked to miscarriage in the early stages of a pregnancy, low oestrogen in women, maintaining egg formation, and zinc helps to create the sperm cell from top to bottom.

How to choose healthy foodstuffs?

Grains: Whole-grains are low in fat. They're also high in fibre and are complex carbohydrates, which help you feel fuller longer and prevent overeating. Choose grains that are "whole," for example, "whole grain" bread, rice and pasta. Try to avoid the enriched, fortified foods that claim to have everything in them.

Fruits and Vegetables: Fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat. They add flavour and variety to your diet. They also contain fibre, vitamins and minerals. Remember the point made on superfoods and organic foods. As soon as you pick a fruit from its tree or a vegetable from the ground, the nutrient content and the benefits it provides start to decline. For this reason, try to get as much locally grown fruits and vegetable, instead of from over-seas. There is no comparison between the nutrient content.

Meat, Poultry and Fish: Baking, broiling and roasting are the healthiest ways to prepare meat. Lean cuts can be pan-broiled or stir-fried. Try to use extra-virgin oils. My favourites are olive oil and coconut oil.

See Mark's suggested 'Nutrient Intake' overleaf.

Pillar Healthcare would also like to offer our fertility diet, used in our clinical study for FREE to all readers. Simply contact fertilitydiet@pillarhealthcare.ie and it will be sent straight to you, within 24 hours. There will also be NO spam, guarantee.



For more information, visit
<http://www.pillarhealthcare.ie/pre-conceive/>

Mark Whitney is the founder and Managing Director of Pillar Healthcare Ltd. Mark developed pre-Conceive, a clinically studied nutritional supplement shown to improve both male and female fertility. Over his 11 years in the nutritional industry Mark has gained tremendous experience from working directly with patients and through direct industry experience.

Nutrient Intake

Water:

- 6-8 glasses a day
- Herbal teas count as well; include green, fennel, dandelion or nettle

Protein:

- Eat a small amount with each meal; palm-sized portion
- Lean meat, chicken, turkey, eggs, fish, legumes like lentils, chickpeas, beans, nuts and seeds, low fat organic dairy or goat, sheep and buffalo dairy (pasteurised once you are pregnant!)

Fats:

Let's clear up some issues first. Not all fats are bad and in fact, most of our fats are actually quite beneficial. We all know about Omega 3, a poly-unsaturated 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, polyunsaturated fats, and omega-3s have the opposite effect.

As a matter of fact, healthy fats play a huge role in helping you manage your moods, stay on top of your mental game, fight fatigue, improve fertility and even control your weight. They are essential to our hormonal make-up and the structure of the egg and sperm.

- Oily fish 3 times a week; salmon, trout, mackerel, sardines
- Handful of mixed nuts and seeds daily; flax, sunflower, pumpkin and sesame
- Include avocado, cold pressed extra virgin olive oil, olives, coconut oil, lean animal protein, cold pressed vegetable oils
- Reduce saturated fats
- Avoid trans and hydrogenated fats and oils

Carbohydrates:

- Follow low GL guidelines
- Fill half your plate with a variety of colourful vegetables especially greens, brassicas, onions and garlic to support oestrogen detoxification in the liver
- Eat 2 portions of fruit daily esp. Berries
- Fill a quarter of the plate with brown rice, quinoa, millet, brown pasta, potatoes

Fibre:

- Vegetables, fruits, whole grains, nuts and seeds, legumes all contain good sources of both soluble and insoluble fibre
- Eat 1 tbsp of flaxseeds daily
- Avoid processed cereals which are full of sugar

Pumpkin and Mushroom Risotto



Method:

1. Preheat oven to 180c
2. Boil the kettle and make up your stock or heat pre-prepared stock. If you're using the stock cube, then place the stock cube in the 900ml of boiling water, stir and set aside.
3. Cut your pumpkin into small chunks and place on a baking tray in the oven, 200°C /400F/Gas Mark 6 for 15-20 minutes or until soft, making sure to scrape out the seeds. It's okay to eat the skin, it's very nutritious!!
4. Heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil or similar oil/butter in a large pan.
5. Crush two cloves of garlic, dice your onion and add them to your pan, stirring to mix.
6. Slice mushrooms and add to the pan and stir all ingredients
7. Add the Arborio rice and add to your pan, coating the rice with the onion and mushrooms.
8. Add your stock in 8 ladle additions, waiting for the liquid from each ladle to be absorbed by the rice before adding your next ladle. Make sure to stir consistently to ensure even cooking.
9. Add a pinch or saffron or smoked paprika, if saffron not available
10. Add fresh basil, parley or sage. Whatever fresh herbs you have to hand, add them in!! There's a huge amount of micro nutrients in fresh herbs.
11. The risotto should be cooked through with all of the liquid absorbed before serving.

Serve with salad leaves for that extra nutrition.

Ingredients:

- 300g dry Arborio rice
- 900ml stock (pre-made, bought or 1 stock cube made in 900ml boiling water)
- 1 small red onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 mushrooms sliced
- Pinch Saffron
- 1 small pumpkin or squash (250-400grams)
- Handful fresh parsley/basil
- Pinch smoke paprika

Serves 3-4 people