

THINKING ABOUT HAVING A BABY?

Your fertility is your ability to have a baby. Many things can affect women's and men's fertility. Here are some ways to improve your chance of becoming pregnant and having a healthy baby.

AGE

Age is the most important factor when it comes to fertility.

Women younger than 35 and men younger than 40 have a better chance of having a child than people who are older.

TIMING OF SEX

The best time to have sex to get pregnant is on the day of ovulation (when an egg is released from the woman's ovary) and the five days before that.

This time depends on the length of the menstrual cycle. A woman's menstrual cycle starts on day 1 of her period and finishes on the day before the next period. Ovulation happens about 14 days before the period starts.

You can use an ovulation calculator to help you work out when you are most fertile and therefore most likely to become pregnant at www.yourfertility.org.au

A few days before ovulation, the vaginal mucus becomes clear and slippery, a bit like egg white, which helps some women work out their most fertile time. You can also use an ovulation predictor kit from the supermarket or pharmacy.

If it's all too hard to work out, having sex every 2-3 days improves your chance of getting pregnant.

BEING AS HEALTHY AS POSSIBLE

Being in good shape will improve men's and women's fertility and general health and will improve the quality of eggs and sperm.

For men and women, being a healthy weight increases the chance of getting pregnant and also affects the baby's health throughout their lives. Eating healthy food and being physically active can help you work towards a healthier weight. It can be hard, but losing even just a few kilos can make a big difference.

It's important that men and women prepare their bodies before creating a baby by:

- Taking the right dose of folic acid and iodine (for women), and zinc and selenium (for men to improve sperm quality)
- Not smoking
- Avoiding alcohol or reducing the amount drunk
- Avoiding recreational drugs and finding out if other medicines are dangerous
- Reducing caffeine drinks
- Avoiding some chemicals found in the home or workplace
- Getting medical conditions under control with help from a doctor.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Your doctor will give you confidential and sensitive advice. They will not tell anyone else about your fertility concerns or whatever else you need to discuss.

For more information about healthy eating, physical activity and getting your body ready for a baby, see www.yourfertility.org.au