

A man's age affects his fertility

Age is no barrier to achieving many things but it can be when it comes to a woman getting pregnant. A woman's age is the most important factor in conception but the father's (or sperm donor's) age also matters. No-one can control their age. But if you want to have a child, or more children, and are in a position to do so, consider your age and that of your partner in planning a family.

Here's the low-down on how a man's age will affect getting a woman pregnant and having a healthy baby.

The facts about men, age and fertility

The quality of a man's sperm decreases over time. As a man ages, it takes longer for his partner to get pregnant. There's also an increased risk of her not conceiving at all. Whatever the age of the mother, the risk of miscarriage is higher if the father is over 45. As men age, the children they father are at greater risk of autism, mental health problems and learning difficulties.

The figures about men, age and fertility

- When other lifestyle factors have been taken into account, the time to pregnancy for women under 25 is affected by a male partner's age. The average time to pregnancy for women whose male partner is under 25 is just over 4.5 months but nearly two years for men over 40.
- There is a five-fold increase in time to pregnancy if the male is aged over 45 years.
- For couples having IVF, the risk of not having a baby is more than five times higher if the male partner is aged 41 or older.
- The volume of a man's semen and sperm motility (the ability of sperm to swim or move forward towards an egg) decrease continually between the ages of 20 and 80.
- The risk of miscarriage is twice as high for women whose male partner is aged over 45 than for those whose partners are under 25.
- Children with fathers aged 40 or older are more than five times as likely to have an autism spectrum disorder than children fathered by men aged under 30.