



## The Most Important Vitamin to Increase Fertility

### The Most Important Vitamin to Increase Fertility

Whether you are just starting to try for a baby or struggling with infertility, there are several natural ways to boost fertility. Eating well and exercising regularly contribute to a healthier you but did you know that simply upping your intake of B vitamins could also enhance your chances of a healthy conception?

B vitamins are water-soluble vitamins that are important for cellular metabolism, producing healthy brain and neural function. To increase your daily intake of B vitamins through natural means, you need to eat more foods high in these vitamins. Primary sources of vitamin B12 are liver, fish such as trout, salmon and tuna, beef, milk and cheeses. Vegan and vegetarian women may need to increase the amount of B12 they receive through dietary supplements.

Another B vitamin that is essential for reproductive health is B6. Impaired DNA methylation, the process by which chemicals called “methyl groups” combine with DNA and other molecules to keep them working, may be responsible for much of male infertility and in women, impaired methylation may decrease egg quality. When trying to conceive, it is vitally important to feed your body the fuel it needs to keep DNA methylation healthy. B vitamins, particularly B6, can enhance methylation and keep sperm and eggs healthy<sup>1</sup>.

Not getting enough B vitamins is a direct cause of infertility among many women. If you are deficient in vitamin B12 for a prolonged period, your body may change the way it ovulates or even prevent fertilized eggs from implanting in the uterine lining<sup>2</sup>. Simple blood tests may reveal whether you are deficient in B12 and symptoms range from lightheadedness, rapid breathing, and weight loss to pale skin and a sore tongue. A more advanced case of the deficiency could result in numbness in the fingers and toes, trouble standing or walking, depression, and disorientation.

Daddies-to-be, B vitamins are important for you, too. Male reproductive problems account for up to 70% of all cases of infertility among couples, according to the National Center for Toxicological Research<sup>1</sup>. Dr. Steven Sinclair argues that nutritional changes can give men a better chance at producing healthier sperm. Increasing the intake of foods full of B vitamins, among other environmental or nutritional changes, can repair sperm production, thereby producing healthier, more robust sperm<sup>3</sup>.

Research conducted in Rotterdam, Netherlands suggests that the Mediterranean diet increases levels of vitamin B6 and significantly increases the incidence of pregnancy in those trying to conceive. The diet consists of vegetable oils, vegetables, fish, legumes and very little snacking or processed



## The Most Important Vitamin to Increase Fertility

foods. Couples who followed a strict Mediterranean diet during IVF treatments were found to have more successful pregnancies than couples that did not eat a Mediterranean diet<sup>4</sup>. So, fill your plate with plant-based foods and limit red meat to only a few times a fortnight. Eat fish and poultry often, however, and use herbs and spices to season your meat instead of salt.

If you are hoping to maximize your chances of a healthy conception, begin increasing your consumption of foods high in B vitamins. In conjunction with plenty of exercise, nutrition can go a long way in improving your fertility.

1. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/14977536>
2. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11304860>
3. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10696117>
4. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20189169>