

## **Fertility: The Male Factor**

Many men see infertility as a female problem yet male fertility problems account for around one third of difficulties in conceiving. There is considerable debate worldwide whether male fertility is decreasing; many studies have shown sperm concentration decreasing over the past 50 years.

### **Here are Seven Secrets for Speedy Sperm**

#### **1. Lots of Sex:**

Sperm are made in the tubules in the testes and are then stored in the epidymis before ejaculation. Free radicals can attack sperm in the epidymis causing DNA damage. Frequent sex ensures fresh undamaged sperm is released.

#### **2. Stay Slim:**

Obese men have sperm counts 22% lower compared to their slimmer counterparts, so it's a good idea to have a BMI below 28.

#### **3. Eat Foods Rich in Antioxidants:**

Foods such as berries, nuts, sunflower seeds, brightly coloured vegetables and green tea contain anti-oxidants which can reduce the damage free radicals have on sperm.

#### **4. Shift Your Butt:**

Men in sedentary occupations such as taxi drivers, truckers or office workers have poorer quality sperm, presumably because the testes get too warm - so it would be wise to stretch your legs and cool your testes at regular intervals throughout the day.

#### **5. Keep Your Cool:**

Testes are located outside the body as sperm production is best at a cooler-than-body temperature, so heating up your testes is not ideal. This means:- boxers not briefs, showers not hot baths, and move your laptop off your lap.

#### **6. Don't do dope, drugs or cigarettes:**

Marijuana lowers sperm counts and alters motility whilst body-building anabolic steroids can cause sperm production to completely stop. Cigarettes also reduce sperm count and quality. All of these effects can be reversed when the harmful substance is stopped, as sperm are being continuously produced.

#### **7. Health supplements:**

There is a considerable body of evidence that health supplements containing antioxidants may improve sperm quality and pregnancy rates. Fertility Associates can provide further information on what is available.

#### **What to do if you suspect a fertility problem:**

Nearly all fertility problems can be treated using some type of assisted reproductive technique (ART). To consult a fertility specialist contact Fertility Associates (in Hamilton phone 07 839 2603).

*Adapted from information supplied by Fertility Associates (Hamilton)*

#### **Suggested reading:**

Additional information can be found on [www.FertilityAssociates.co.nz](http://www.FertilityAssociates.co.nz)