

## General Fertility Advice

The following recommendations are based on evidence from local and international studies and guidelines. They are formulated to enhance the potential of couples to achieve a desired pregnancy. Some of the advice may not be applicable to every couple but all of them have been shown to be beneficial with respect to fertility and achieving a normal pregnancy. If there are any queries regarding any of the recommendations, you are welcome to ask the attending doctor for clarification during your next visit at the clinic.

### General advice for the couple

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle will improve the chance of getting pregnant. This includes a balanced diet and an appropriate amount of exercise. The former should include an adequate intake of food with high fibre content, e.g. green vegetables, fruits, brown bread and certain cereals like 'Wheatabix'. The amount of exercises should be moderate and not excessive. Excessive level of exercise may impair ovulation in women.

To have the best chance of achieving a pregnancy, the couple is advised to have regular sexual intercourse at a frequency of about two to three times a week. With regular sexual activity, the likelihood of seizing the optimal time for conception (i.e. around the time of ovulation) is very much increased.

The previously much advocated daily monitoring of the woman's body temperature has not been shown to be effective in helping women to conceive. This is also true for the commercially available urine test kits, which aim to time the event of ovulation. These two methods are therefore discouraged.

Smoking is not only detrimental to the general health of men and women, it can also affect the fertility of both partners, particularly that of the man. It is therefore advised that for those who smoke, they should reduce their cigarette smoking or preferably stop smoking altogether.

Excessive alcohol intake may impair the man's sperm count and activity. In the woman, it may affect her fertility adversely and, if pregnant, may lead to abnormality of the baby. Men are therefore advised to reduce their drinking to no more than two alcoholic drinks a day. For women, the recommendation is no more than two alcoholic drinks a week.

(Note: One alcoholic drink is approximately equal to half a pint of beer, a single measure of spirit or a glass of wine.)

### Advice for the female partner

Any woman who is trying to conceive is advised to take supplement of folic acid. This dosage should be continued during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. This supplement helps to prevent the occurrence of spinal defect and related problems in the baby. For those who wish to take our advice, there are special preparations of folic acid of the right dosage which can be purchased over the counter in most local chemist shops.

Women who are excessively overweight (for instance, over 80 kg for someone of average height) are advised to lose some of that weight in a gradual manner, in order to enhance their

fertility. For those who find it difficult to reduce their weight, arrangement could be made at the clinic for them to follow a weight reduction programme under the guidance of our dietician.

### Advice for the Male Partner

For men who are found or suspected to have low or poor sperm count, they are advised to avoid situations or clothing which may increase the temperature around their scrotum/testes. Loose fitting trousers and underwear are beneficial in this respect.

### Important information

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

### Your comments

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team – Tel: (01323) 417400 Ext: 5860 or by email at: [esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net](mailto:esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net)

### Hand hygiene

The Trust is committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available at the patient bedside for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

### Other formats

**If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department.**

**Tel: 01424 755255 Ext: 2620**

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask your nurse or doctor.

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### Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:  
David Chui and Dexter Pascall Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist

The directorate group that have agreed this patient information leaflet:  
Guideline Implementation Group

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Responsible clinician/author: David Chui Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist