

FertilityRoad

YOUR PATH TO PARENTHOOD

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 EXPERT ADVICE AND OPINIONS

TOP TIPS FOR WINTER

How to maximise your fertility in the cold months

Kristin Davis

Adopts a new role as mother

BOY OR GIRL

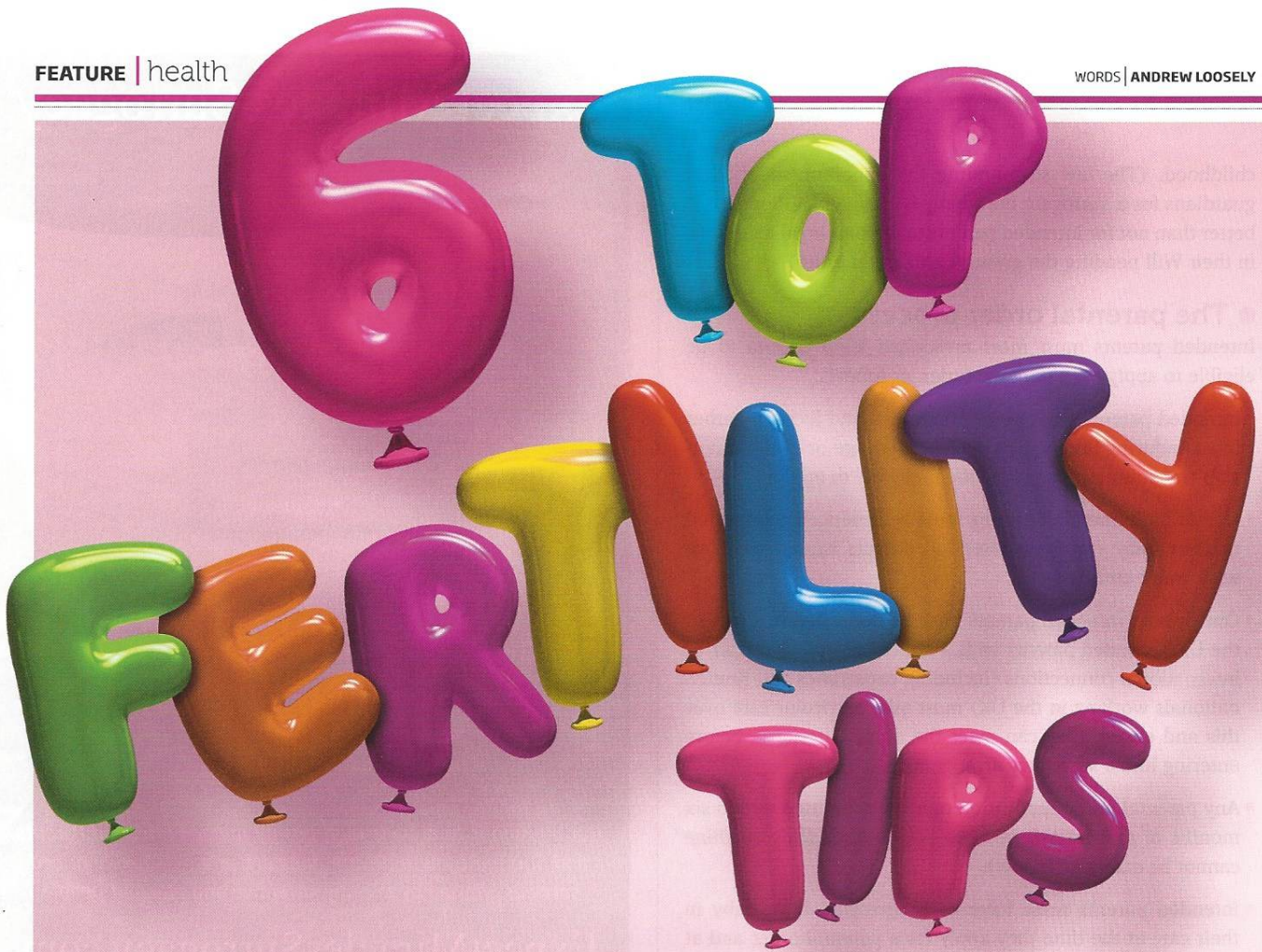
Should you be allowed to choose?



ACUPUNCTURE

INTERNATIONAL SURROGACY LAW

BLASTOCYSTS



The fertility journey can often be a confusing road with a complex information to make sense of. The process can sometimes be difficult because it's hard to know what the right action is for you and your partner. Andrew Loosely shares his tips he has learnt over the pass 10 years to help you get on the right track.

1 ELIMINATE AND REDUCE STRESS

The number one contributing factor to infertility is stress according to trials carried out by researchers at Emory University in Atlanta. The results showed that stress increased the release of stress hormones in your body, which significantly reduces ovulation and your chances of successful conception. Many other clinical trials have shown similar results, with imbalances in hormones such as Cortisol (a stress related hormone), which hinders your ability to conceive.

Women with hectic jobs are most at risk and are often most in denial about the stress in their lives, but it dramatically affects men too. Spend some time thinking about how your day-to-day life is constructed and see if you can make some changes to reduce any stressful areas. It is helpful to differentiate between external stress and internal stress; Internal stress arises when you are not able to achieve the goals you set yourself while external stress is created by relatives, friends, and work pressures.

Treat yourself and take some time out for a change of scenery or why not go away with your friends. It is well known that you relax more when you go away. Search the internet for little trips away and weekend breaks. It will give you something to look forward to, and of course it will do you the world of good.

2 QUIT SMOKING

We all know that smoking is bad for us but when it comes to fertility issues its negative effects are even more profound. Smoking may result in underdeveloped eggs or sperm and it may also affect the genetic makeup of the unborn baby if you do conceive whilst smoking.

The American Society for Reproductive Medicine found that the prevalence of infertility is higher, and the time it takes to conceive is longer, in smokers compared to non-smokers. Active smoking by either partner has adverse effects, and the impact of passive cigarette smoke exposure is only slightly smaller than for active smoking.

Research indicates that cigarette smoking is harmful to a woman's ovaries, and the degree of harm is dependent upon the amount and the period of time a woman smokes. Smoking appears to accelerate the loss of eggs and reproductive function and may also advance the time of menopause by several years.

It was also shown that men who smoke have a lower sperm count and motility and increased abnormalities in sperm shape and function. The advice is that smoking should be discouraged for both male and female partners in couples with a history of infertility or recurrent miscarriage.



3 STOP CAFFEINE

As nice as it may be to sit down for a cup of tea or coffee, it isn't helping your fertility. Caffeine has a negative effect on fertility and should be avoided where possible according to recent research. Common sources of caffeine are: tea (green, white and black), coffee, fizzy drinks and some other products. Always check the back of the product label if you are unsure. Try to replace these products with other natural drinks that are free from caffeine. Try to also avoid decaffeinated tea and coffee as they contain other unpleasant ingredients.

Research published in the *British Medical Journal* shows that even one cup of coffee a day causes an imbalance in sex hormones, which compromises sperm and egg health. In women, the uterine lining is also affected, which may stop implantation of a fertilised egg and may also be a cause of early miscarriage.

Caffeine consumption during pregnancy is associated with an increased risk of fetal growth restriction and this continues throughout pregnancy. Sensible advice would be to reduce caffeine intake before conception and throughout pregnancy.

My personal recommendation to my clients is to stop consuming caffeine completely whilst trying to conceive, and not to start again until they stop breast-feeding.

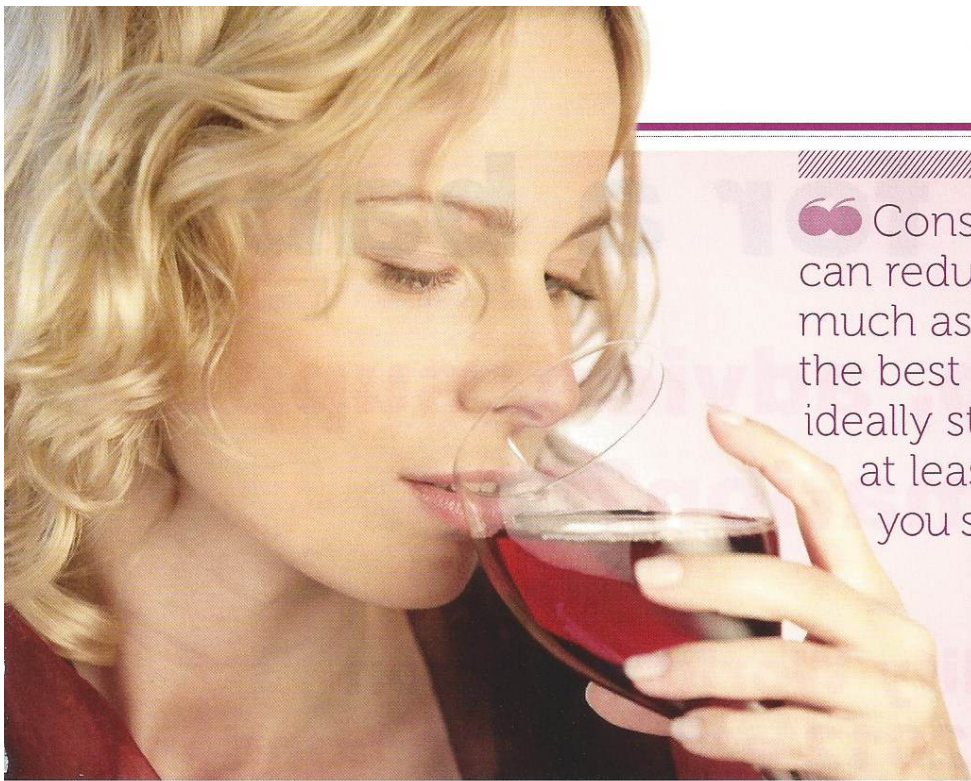
4 MORE ANIMAL, FISH AND PLANT FATS IN YOUR DIET

Evidence from studies as far back as the 1940's shows that animal and plant fats (if not refined) are good for us and are a vital source of nutrients and cholesterol, which we need to keep our own cholesterol in check. The idea that eating fat makes you fat and gives you high cholesterol is a myth, but you must avoid hydrogenated oils and refined fats and oils.

Low fat diets are detrimental to health and will affect your fertility and chances of having a baby. The reason lies in the effect that fats have on your cholesterol level and having no fats in your diet causes a deficiency and imbalance of the cholesterol, which is connected to poor hormone production and release. This can cause problems with ovulation as discovered by researchers at Harvard School of Public Health

Their study showed that women who ate more than two portions a day of low fat foods were 85 per cent more likely to be infertile, due to ovulatory disorders, than those who only ate it less than once a week. They also discovered a variety of other issues relating to a lack of fats in the diet.

The advice is to have a little natural plant oil or animal fat in your diet every day to increase your fertility health. »



☞ Consumption of alcohol can reduce your fertility by as much as 50%. To give yourself the best chance, you should ideally stop consuming alcohol at least three months before you start trying for a baby. ☞

5 THE EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL

Consumption of alcohol can reduce your fertility by as much as 50% as proven in clinical trials and revealed in a Danish study. To give yourself the best chance, you should ideally stop consuming alcohol at least three months before you start trying for a baby. If you have already started trying then aim to stop drinking alcohol as soon as possible. You will instantly start to increase your possibilities of success.

The Danish study showed that women who drank less than 5 standard glasses of wine per week (approximately 5 units) were twice as likely to conceive within six months, compared to women who drank more alcohol.

Alcohol consumption affects both partners causing damage to egg and sperm quality. In men it can increase abnormal sperm, decrease sperm count and reduce the motility (movement) and also volume of the sperm.

Alcohol exhausts your body's energy, as it's a very toxic substance that requires a large consumption of energy to remove it efficiently, and also to counterbalance the negative effects it causes on your body. Where possible both partners should avoid it for 3-4 months in advance of trying for a baby, and most definitely throughout pregnancy and breast-feeding.

6 AVOID PAIN RELIEF

A study at Oxford University has shown that pain relief drugs interfere with ovulation and may even stop it completely in some women. This would be sufficient to cause what looks like infertility. Once the drugs are stopped your body will balance itself over a few cycles and ovulation should begin again. In some cases Progesterone levels can also be negatively affected when using these drugs. This could and has been shown to lead to miscarriage and also problems with implantation after the egg is fertilised.

If you can, try to avoid taking pain relief if you are trying to conceive. If you suffer with pain during your period or at other times of your cycle, you may find that using another treatment such as acupuncture will be much more conducive. Period pain is generally due to a lack of circulation of the menstrual blood

and once it starts to flow efficiently, the pain will stop. Acupuncture is known to increase blood flow through the uterus and this will stop the pain. My clients report less pain within one menstrual cycle, and no pain by about three to six cycles depending on the severity they first experienced. No painkillers are used after the cycle has been balanced.

• WHAT TO DO NEXT

If after reading these tips you feel a bit overwhelmed, just remember that this is only for a time period and it will most definitely help towards your goal of having a baby. Some of my clients struggle with making the necessary lifestyle changes at the beginning of their treatment, but the ones that manage it generally conceive within six months of starting the programme.

My suggestion to you is to stop any of the above that you may be doing, and focus on the long-term outcome. You'll also experience much better health.

• CASE STUDY – UNEXPLAINED INFERTILITY

After one miscarriage and several years of trying to conceive, resulting in a diagnosis of unexplained infertility, I started to work with this couple at my clinic. They were fully onboard with the programme and made all of the necessary lifestyle and dietary changes that were suggested to them. They didn't smoke but liked to have a drink at times and there was also room for improving their diet. After just six weeks of following the above advice along with the other components of the treatment programme, they conceived. Nine months later they delivered a healthy happy little girl. 🎉

To read their full success story on my website please visit: www.NaturalFertilityExpert.com and go to the *Success Stories* page.

Andrew is the creator of *The Baby Creating Plan* and has been using acupuncture to treat thousands over the last ten years. He helps couples to conceive naturally and alongside IVF, and with great success. To claim your **FREE** copy of his book, *The Ultimate Fertility Guide*, please visit www.NaturalFertilityExpert.com