

Fertility Success: A Collaborative Care Checklist

Are you and your partner planning to or struggling to conceive? Feeling frustrated and confused when navigating through the preconception space on your own?

To get you started on the right track, here is your Collaborative Care Checklist which has been written by our naturopaths and pelvic health physiotherapists at Papaya Clinic - an innovative women's allied health clinic dedicated to providing holistic women's health services for women in all stages of life.

Please note, this checklist considers fertility in a heterosexual scenario.

Women - Are you Ovulating?

- Cervical fluid (increases, clear egg white consistency)
- Cervix position (high and open) and firmness (soft)
- Libido (increases)
- Waking temperature (increases)
- Mid cycle pain (present, for some)

If yes, then your fertile window is the 6-day interval ending on the day of ovulation.

If no or unsure, consult with a naturopath regarding Fertility Charting and Investigative Testing.

Men - Producing Healthy Sperm?

- Appearance (nil debris, clumping, or viscosity changes)
- Motility (optimal ranges for total motility, progressive motility, and vitality)
- Quantity (optimal sperm concentration and total sperm count)

If yes, then ejaculate every 1-2 days within her fertile window within the vagina.

If no or unsure, consult with your GP & naturopath regarding Investigative Testing.

Women & Men - Making Babies

If you both answered yes, consider the following:

- Intimacy every 1-2 days once cervical fluid is present
- Opt for jojoba oil to support pH regulation and sperm survival. Avoid lubricants
- Encourage 'drawing' of sperm into the cervix by orgasming post ejaculation
- Wait 10 minute post ejaculation before urinating
- It takes a minimum of 2 days for sperm to travel to meet the egg

Women & Men - Investigative Testing

- Nutrient and heavy metal screening (e.g., aluminium, lead, mercury)
- Female sex hormone profile (saliva or urine recommended)
- Male sex hormone profile (saliva or urine recommended)
- Genitourinary infection screening (e.g., *Ureaplasma*, *Neisseria*)
- Adrenal hormone profile

Women & Men - Lifestyle

- Regular exercise and a healthy Body Mass Index (18.5 - 24.9)
- Minimise exposure to environmental toxins (e.g., solvents, pesticides, heavy metals)
- Cease smoking and recreational drugs, and minimise exposure to secondary smoke
- Men, be mindful of electromagnetic waves from extended mobile phone use upon sperm production and quality
- Implementing stress management techniques (e.g., acupuncture, massage, meditation, diaphragmatic breathing)
- Use a pH friendly and natural lubricant
- Counselling or psychological therapy, particularly when conception attempts are unsuccessful

Women & Men - Nutrition & Herbal Medicines

- Refer to 'Fertility Nutrition: For Couples' Handout
- Consult with a naturopath for individualised prescription of herbal medicines for fertility

Women - Pelvic Health & Movement

- Complete the Australian Pelvic Floor Questionnaire for a quick screening, bring to your pelvic health physio/ GP to discuss results (can be downloaded for free on the Papaya Clinic website)
- Pelvic floor examination with pelvic health physio. Options:
 - Internal digital exam
 - Transperineal Ultrasound
 - Transabdominal Ultrasound
- Address potential pain with intercourse
 - Manual therapy
 - Breathwork
 - TENS machine for pain modulation
 - Dilators, pelvic wand
- Address overall hip and pelvic tension