

## Excess Fat affects Fertility



Being overweight impairs fertility and is a common cause of miscarriage, gestational diabetes, toxemia, low birth weight and premature birth. If you are overweight and struggling to conceive these can be sobering facts to hear, however there is always hope and the ability to take control of your well-being.

Let's first discover why this happens..

Although the exact mechanisms of how obesity affects fertility are not well understood, there is an apparent insulin-mediated hyper stimulation of ovarian steroid production and decreased sex hormone production. Obesity has also been associated with an increased risk of early pregnancy loss after IVF. Excess weight could exert its effects this way by either acting on the ovaries which produce eggs, or on the endometrium where the fertilised egg implants.

Aiming toward being a healthy weight is really beneficial for improved ovulatory function and your chances of getting pregnant. The "side effects" aren't so bad, either, given that slimming down may improve insulin sensitivity, blood pressure and cholesterol levels etc. Obviously diet will play a key factor in losing the weight and keeping it off.

As body mass index (BMI) increases, the pregnancy success rate declines. It has been said that the range of BMIs from 20 to 24 are the "fertility zone". If you aren't in or near this zone, working to move your BMI in that direction or gaining or losing some weight should increase your chances of conceiving. Relatively small changes are often enough to have the desired effect of healthy ovulation and improved fertility. If you are actually too lean, gaining a few kilos can sometimes be enough to restart ovulation and menstrual periods. Conversely if overweight losing 5% to 10% of your current weight is often enough to improve ovulation.

Some exciting results from the Nurses Health study showed that exercise can be a boon for fertility. These important findings have established a vital link between activity and falling pregnant. Keep in mind though that the fertility zone is an ideal, not an absolute and it means you aren't

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over-doing or under-doing exercise. For most women this means getting at least 30 minutes of exercise daily.

If you are trying to conceive and wonder whether your nutritional status, weight range and lifestyle factors are optimal or otherwise, a Naturopathic consultation will go a long way to achieving your goal. I have enjoyed wonderful success stories for families who discovered ways to optimise their chances of pregnancy, and to hold a healthy full term babe. There are a great deal of studies in this area- certain vital supplements that could be the missing factor in your journey to parenthood or adding to your offspring. Ask me for more details and in the meantime ensure that you enjoy a diet with ample healthy protein sources, limited refined carbohydrates, ample “good fats” and quality water intake - small sips often, to stay hydrated and avoid unnecessary eating purely due to thirst!

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references:

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