

[IMAGE]

## **Trying to Get Pregnant? What you need to be doing NOW**

By Julie T. Chen, MD

Fertility is a complicated topic. The process of conceiving a child involves multiple factors including the fertility of your partner, your diet, your weight, your stress level and mind-set, and your overall health. Things like your thyroid function, whether your estrogen and progesterone levels are appropriate for conceiving and then carrying a child, and whether you've got a disease that lessens your fertility such as polycystic ovarian syndrome or Celiac disease also comes into play when we talk about conception.

If you think about all the factors that may affect your fertility, it's enough to cause stress which is also not good for fertility. So, I'm going to break it down to what you need to do right now if you are thinking about having a child. This way, we can try to allay your fears and worries and just keep you focusing on the excitement of potentially increasing the number in your family unit.

The most important thing to do when you are thinking about starting or expanding your family is to make a visit to your obstetrician. You will want to have your regular blood count checked to make sure you don't have anemia. You also want to make sure your kidney and liver is doing well along with your thyroid and hormone levels. You also will want to have stopped your birth control method if you are using a hormone contraception method. You will want to make sure you get ruled out for any infections or sexually transmitted diseases and to have your fasting blood sugar checked to make sure you're not at risk for gestational diabetes. If you are at risk, you should start to work on your diet in eliminating sugary foods and high glycemic load foods.

Fertility - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark Prior to all this, you should already start on a prenatal vitamin that has DHA (a type of omega-3 that helps with the fetal brain and nerve development). You should start with regular exercise or activity which helps you to de-stress but also helps your body regulate hormonal levels better and keeps your weight at a healthy level for conceiving a child.

When it comes to weight, you don't want to be too heavy or too light. So, being over- or under-weight is not good for fertility. You should be in the normal range and if you want to ensure that your body is as un-inflamed as possible, you should be eating a mostly plant-based anti-inflammatory diet.



Many of the non-organic meat products may have some level of hormonal impact on your own hormone system, so if you want to be extra careful about increasing your fertility chances, try eating organic meats and more of Mother Nature's vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and nuts.

Finally, you should be getting plenty of rest and make sure to give yourself relaxation time every day even if it's just a few minutes. High levels of stress may decrease your fertility so keep your mind and body in a balanced calm state by making rest and relaxation a priority in your life.

If you find that you are having trouble conceiving, you should first see a fertility specialist to rule out diseases like the ones mentioned above as well as many others. You should also have your partner checked out to see if fertility is an issue in your partner. Finally, if everything checks out, you can consider acupuncture as a potential to help with conception as well as stress management.

When all else fails, just remember that this is a time for positivity and the creation of a life is all about positivity, optimism and faith. Just remember all those stories you hear about how some couple conceived as soon as they stopped trying. I'm not saying to stop trying, not at all, or even to listen to stories as a way to become fertile. What I am alluding to is that stress surrounding the conception of a baby can be a significant factor in fertility. So just remember that and keep your mind and heart calm and assemble a team of supporters who can help you achieve your goal...and next year, you may just have a new member in your already happy family.

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