

How to boost your chances of falling pregnant naturally

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One in seven couples struggle to conceive after a year of trying, according to the NHS. [Photo: Getty]

Falling [pregnant](#) is rarely as straightforward as your sex education teacher made out.

For many [couples](#) trying to conceive, the process can take far longer than you might have planned for.

Factor in the pressures of [social media](#) – which makes it look like every couple you know is just falling pregnant – and well-meaning but tactless family members, and this can lead to a huge amount of worry.

“Modern couples tend to pile on the pressure very quickly,” says [Emma Cannon](#), a [fertility](#) and women’s health expert, tells *Yahoo Style UK*.

“There is a great deal of fear in society and comparisons on social media which can be the perfect storm when you are already anxious.”

“Some 25 years ago, my job was about educating women who were mostly very uninformed about health, their bodies and their fertility. Now, it is mostly managing anxiety and helping to navigate the endless sea of information out there,” she adds.

Should you be seeking fertility treatment?

According to the [NHS](#), difficulty conceiving is defined as not falling pregnant after a year of trying with regular, unprotected sex – which equates to roughly every two or three days.

Around one in seven couples experience this according to the NHS, and couples are advised to seek medical advice after trying for a year (sooner if a woman is over 36 or if either partner is aware of existing fertility problems).

However, couples may feel impatient in the interim, and wish to do their utmost best to speed up the fertility process, explains Cannon.

What can you do to boost your fertility naturally?

“A lot of people may be impatient rather than infertile. It’s important to give yourself time before worrying unnecessarily as pregnancy isn’t always straightforward for everyone,” according to Cannon.

“For example understanding your body and your hormones, eating well to make your body function better, as well as managing stress and improving your libido are natural ways that can help boost fertility that couples often don’t think about.”

Proper nutrition

Nutrition is important when you are trying to conceive, Cannon explains. She recommends a mainly plant-based diet with – if you are a meat-eater – only a small amount of meat.

“Eat grains which have been soaked well before use, as well as seeds and nuts which are great for your health in small quantities as well as good quality fats and oils in the diet – try olive, hemp, or pumpkin oil,” she advises

“It is also worth considering taking probiotics and prebiotics as these may help improve gut health.”

Taking some me-time

It is, of course, always important to take time for yourself – but especially so when you are trying to conceive.

“Too much stress can also affect our hormone levels which subsequently impact the menstrual cycle, affecting fertility,” says Cannon.

This isn’t limited to budding mothers – men should also be aware of stress levels when trying for a baby, as stress is linked to poor sperm quality. Cannon recommends meditation, relaxing in a bath, baking, reading a book or getting a massage from your partner – whatever helps you wind down.

Be aware of your cycle

Conception is all about timing – which is why Cannon recommend women tune into their individual unique cycle in order to optimise their chances of getting pregnant.

“Each woman’s cycle length is unique, so it is important to understand how your own body works as there is only a small window each month where conception is even possible.

“By being able to identify this, a woman can maximise her chances of natural conception and gain a whole lot on information about her cycle.”

Shape up

Weight matters when it comes to falling pregnant – Cannon advises women should aim to be within 15lbs (7kg) of the ideal range for their height for their best chance of conceiving. You can calculate this using the [NHS healthy weight calculator](#).

Whether you are looking to lose weight or not, exercise is important to prepare your body for the pregnancy process.

“Getting fit before conception is very important as it will help your body cope better with the demands of pregnancy,” says Cannon.

“If you’re not an avid exerciser, try introducing gentle exercise, such as brisk walking, swimming or yoga. Consistency is key so find a routine you enjoy and make sure you dedicate 30 minutes three times a week.”

However, make sure you don’t take it too far – as overexercising won’t do you any favours, either.

“Extreme exercise can have a detrimental impact on the body; low body fat can stop periods all together and I have seen an increase in hypothalamic amenorrhea (e.g. menstruation stops due to problems with the hypothalamus) from over exercise. Moderation is key!”

Try acupuncture

Cannon recommends acupuncture, a complementary therapy which has been used for thousands of years – and has in [some studies](#) been linked to improved fertility.

“For women wanting to conceive, acupuncture can be used to regulate hormone function, increasing blood flow to the ovaries and uterus and help to relax muscles which can improve the chance of an embryo implanting.”

Once again, this treatment could be beneficial for men as well as women.

“As acupuncture may also improve sperm motility and optimise male fertility hormone levels,” says Cannon.

Stop worrying

While it’s easier said than done, reducing stress is a key component to falling pregnant.

“When we are in ‘fight or flight’, or stress response, state, this is not the optimal time to conceive,” she explains. “I want couples to feel safe and supported and that they have knowledge and options.”