

Male infertility

Infertility is an old problem usually faced by the couples, although it's still perceived in some cultures as a "Woman's problem", up to half of all cases of infertility problems involves the male partner.

What is infertility?

It is the inability to get pregnant after trying for at least one year without using birth control; about 15% of couples suffer from this problem.

Is infertility reversible?

It depends on the cause; some of them are totally reversible.

When shall I seek medical help?

Usually after one year of trying to conceive, but if the female age is older than 35 years old it could be sooner.

What's wrong with me?

Infertility in men has many causes; vary from lifestyle and environmental factors to diseases and genetic factors.

Reasons for male infertility could be one of the following:

Sexual transmitted diseases like gonorrhea; infertility is reversed by treating the infection.

Physical blockage which prevents sperm from getting into the semen, like birth defects or damage, in this case surgery might solve the problem.

Retrograde ejaculation, in this case semen does not come out of the penis during ejaculation, it enters the bladder instead. This could be due to diabetes, some medications, surgery to the bladder, prostate or urethra, usually over the counter cold medicine can solve this problem.

Genetic and autoimmune disorders, although it's a rare condition but cystic fibrosis or the body targeting the sperms as foreign objects can be a reason for male infertility.

Hormonal imbalance can cause infertility and this can be corrected by hormonal replacement and correction.

Heat can cause infertility, it could be as simple as taking too many hot baths, sauna or biking for long periods, wearing clothes that are so tight and they trap heat, or it could be due to a medical conditions like varicoceles which is a condition where the veins in the scrotum are enlarged this heat may affect the sperm production.

Sexual problems such as impotence (erectile dysfunction) and premature ejaculation have a great influence on fertility. These conditions can be caused either by psychological problems such as anxiety, guilt, low self-esteem or by physical problems such as diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and heart diseases. In addition to that it can be a side effect to a medication you take that's why you should ask your pharmacist about the side effects of your medications.

Are there any other factors that might affect my fertility?

There are several factors that might affect you, like:

Excessive exercise, some studies have shown that too much exercise may lead to the release of too many steroid hormones that can affect fertility.

Use of drugs like Marijuana (Hashish), smoking tobacco, drinking alcohol, and taking anabolic steroids for body building may reduce your sperm count.

Exposure to toxins and environmental hazards, such as pesticides, radiation, and radioactive material may affect fertility.

Whom shall I see & how infertility will be evaluated?

You should see a doctor, usually an urologist. After physical examination and history taking, the doctor will ask you to submit a semen sample for analysis.

What are the vitamins and supplements that might help?

Studies have shown that L-carnitine, folic acid and co-enzyme Q10 might help in increasing sperm count and improving the motility, also some studies has shown that vitamin E, zinc may increase sperm count.