

Preparing Your Partner for Pregnancy

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The Male Reproductive System

The male reproductive system is also under the influence of hormones and is responsible for producing sperm. The male reproductive system is both internal and external. The testes are located within the scrotal sac, the pouch of skin located below the man's penis. These are the two organs that produce both sperm and testosterone, the male hormone that helps maintain the male sexual characteristics. As sperm are produced, they pass from the testes through the coiled channels of the epididymis, an organ that stores and nourishes them as they mature. Once sperm are completely mature, they move into the vas deferens. This tubal structure connects the epididymis with the seminal vesicles, the two pouch like glands that provide storage for the mature sperm. When a man ejaculates, sperm from the seminal vesicles combine with a thick fluid from the prostate gland. This seminal fluid (or ejaculate) is deposited into the woman's vagina during intercourse. Possible Causes

There are several possible causes of endometriosis; one possible cause is called retrograde menstruation. Normally during a menses, the menstrual blood comes out of the cervix and into the vagina. In around 75% of women, a small amount of blood flows backwards down the fallopian tubes and into the pelvic cavity. This blood contains tiny seedlings of the lining of the womb - endometrium. It is not known why in some women this might implant and lead to endometriosis, but not in others - it may have something to do with a woman's immune response and ability to fight off & remove these seedlings.

The metaplasia theory suggests that because the uterus, tubes, peritoneum and part of the ovary are all developed from the same area in the fetus, endometriosis might be caused by genetic factors and some cells taking the wrong turn during development.

The vascular theory rests on the fact that endometrial tissue from the lining of the womb can be found in the blood stream. It might be that these small deposits end up in other areas far from the womb and grow from there. This would explain the rare finding of endometriosis in sites such as the lung.

Most likely there is no one simple answer to explain it, and the true cause is a composite of all these and will at some time in the future be explained by western scientific medicine.

The Role of Spermatogenesis

The development of normal, mature sperm is key in establishing male fertility and involves an interplay of several factors:

An exchange of hormonal messages between the brain and the testicles

The secretion of necessary reproductive hormones and normal sperm development

Normal transport of developing sperm from testicles via the epididymis and vas deferens to the seminal vesicles.

The production of sperm is primarily regulated by three hormones which, unlike in women, are secreted in a constant, rather than cyclic, way:

FSH

LH

Testosterone

In the male, FSH and LH from the pituitary are responsible for maintaining the sperm production process. The pituitary gland, which is located at the base of the brain, secretes the same hormones in regulating the female's reproductive functions.

FSH is responsible for stimulating sperm production in the testicles. LH stimulates the production of testosterone. Under the influence of Sertoli cells and specific hormones, immature sperm cells develop through several stages and eventually become mature sperm cells, called spermatozoa. These spermatozoa then pass through the epididymis where, after 18 to 24 hours, they gain motility (movement). After acquiring the ability to move, mature sperm are stored in the vas deferens and seminal vesicles until ejaculation.

Male infertility can often be the cause of a couple's inability to become pregnant. Male infertility factors should be investigated alongside investigating the normal functioning of the female reproductive system. Male infertility may be related to inadequate sperm count or abnormalities relating to shape and movement of sperm. While varicocele, or varicose veins within the scrotum are common, it is unclear how important they are in the process of male infertility. Testicular injury that results in damage to sperm-producing structures or undescended testicles are important causes of infertility. Hormonal imbalances, the presence of other diseases such as diabetes mellitus, and pituitary tumours are uncommon problems affecting fertility.

Male fertility tests

When preparing for pregnancy the male partner should undergo a reproductive health examination, infection screen and sperm quality test. The sperm quality test is simple a semen sample is analysed in the lab. If this shows low overall sperm levels and/or high levels of abnormal sperm forms then nutritional supplements (and herbal medicine) can be used to improve sperm quality. Sperm samples are taken only after 3 days of abstinence from sexual intercourse or masturbation. Sperm production in the male takes 3 months so the benefit of any treatment aimed at improving sperm produced can only be judged in the third month after treatment has commenced and a follow-up semen test is advised at the end of the third month of treatment. There are very good prescription herbal medicines which improve sperm quality.

Male fertility supplements

Vitamin C – 200mg
Vitamin E – 300 iu
Vitamin D – 100iu
Vitamin B1 – 20mg
Vitamin B2 – 20mg
Vitamin B3 – 20mg
Vitamin B5 – 20mg
Vitamin B6 – 20mg
Vitamin B12 – 20mcg
Vitamin K – 100mcg
Vitamin A – 2300iu
Zinc – 30mg
Calcium – 20mg
Manganese – 5mg
Magnesium – 20mg
Beta Carotene – 15mg
Iron – 5mg
Folic acid – 400mcg
Selenium – 100mcg
Chromium – 20mcg
L-arginine - 1000mg
L-carnitine - 100mg
L-taurine – 100mg

Our Female Healthcare Philosophy

At the Women's Natural Health Clinic, we specialise in providing comprehensive natural reproductive, gynaecological, obstetric and general healthcare for females from adolescence to post-menopause. Our approach is to integrate techniques in both oriental and western medical diagnosis to formulate a naturally oriented treatment plan combining acupuncture, herbal medicine, naturopathic medicine, nutritional therapy, exercise and lifestyle. Each treatment plan is tailored specifically to each individual woman maximizing results.

Please email us at enquiries@naturalgynae.com with questions, we are more than happy to provide any information via email that will assist you in deciding which treatment approach would be best for you

For more information, contact details and appointments click here www.naturalgynae.com