

## Male Infertility: Myths and Facts

**1. We are married for six months and are trying for a baby. Things just doesn't seem to happen? I think there must be a problem? We should go to a fertility expert?**

Hey Dear, Patience is the key to success. It is important to understand that fertility is a science of probabilities measured by chance of conception per menstrual cycle of the female.

Normally the chances for any couple to conceive is around 20% per month. So out of 100, 84 couples would successfully conceive within one year and close to 92 % in two years of an active try. A fertility evaluation or doctor visit generally should be planned after one year of an active try in healthy couples.

However, in cases where the age of the female is above 35 years or You have some "fertility destroyers" in your medical history or habits, you might go for an early evaluation.

Few "fertility destroyers" for males are:

- Smoking (Avoid it)
- Alcohol (Limit it)
- Drugs and rehabilitation (Leave it)
- Steroids and external testosterone for Body building (Stop it)
- Certain Professions like welders, Painters, Chimney cleaners, Drivers, long sitting jobs, construction workers
- History of mumps infection or any surgery / treatment related to pelvic area like chemotherapy or radiotherapy for cancers

**2. I am healthy with no medical issues? I think problem lies only with my wife?**

No dear, fertility problem affects 1 in 14 couples and roughly half of the times the problem lies with the man. Following are the reasons linked with the fertility issues:

Table 1: Causes of subfertility	
Ovulation problem in women	25%
Fallopian Tube Disorders in women	20%
Male issues	30%
Uterine or peritoneal disorders in women	10%
Unexplained subfertility both men and women	25%
In 40% of the cases a pathology exists in both Male and female	

**3. My semen looks apparently fine? There should not be any issue in conceiving from my side?**

Sperms cannot be seen with the naked eyes (Guess why laboratories have expensive microscopes). Almost all the ejaculated semen that a man sees comes from the accessory glands (prostate and seminal vesicles).

So even if someone lacks sperms (azoospermia in medical language), The semen apparently appears normal. And yes, even if someone lacks sperms, The general and the sexual health remains absolutely fine except in a few cases. Remember, some great celebrities were known to lack sperms.

**4. Do we have to have sex only on specific days of my wife's cycle?**

Now, that's a tough call for us as opinions are divided. Medical science states than in a female the egg is released at around 14 days of her cycle in cases of normal 28 days cycle. So, Obviously, keeping a physical contact near to "these days" have proven to be more successful than other days. However, science has proven that sperms survive in uterus for 3 days and an egg for day Hence it becomes more fruitful if an intercourse happens every other night. Also, the quality of sperms deteriorates if longer abstinence is maintained and so is the romance.

**5. I checked my semen analysis report and it says just 10% of the sperms I produce are normal looking and only half of them seems moving? Can I have babies?**

Oh dear, it's an ever-busy Testis-factory that produces sperms in millions on a daily basis. Imagine the production-load it carries. It is subjected to commit mistakes during the production of the sperms. WHO Manual states that the Minimum refence range for a normal sperm report should be:

	WHO 2021
<b>Semen volume</b> (mL)	1.4 (1.3–1.5)
<b>Total sperm number</b> (10 <sup>6</sup> per ejaculate)	39 (35–40)
<b>Total motility</b> (%)	42 (40–43)
<b>Progressive motility</b> (%)	30 (29–31)
<b>Non progressive motility</b> (%)	1 (1–1)
<b>Immotile sperm</b> (%)	20 (19–20)
<b>Vitality</b> (%)	54 (50–56)
<b>Normal forms</b> (%)	4 (3.9–4)

So as far as your parameters are in this range don't worry.

**6. Lots of online products are available which claim to boost male fertility and increase sperms? How to rely on?**

Till date, medical science does not have enough data that any fertility booster / sperm enhancer/Sperm energizers medicines (Antioxidants in medical language) efficiently increase sperm parameters. However, combining them with a lifestyle modification might work better than using them alone. So, say no to stress, decrease your alcohol intake, stop smoking, go for a regular exercise and try to reduce weight, eat healthy include fruits and vegetables in the diet which have natural antioxidants and see your sperms jumping up in joy.

**7. I am into a show business and love wearing tight jeans and boxers. Is that harmful to my sperms?**

Initially it was thought that tightness around the thigh area might raise the temperature which is damaging for sperm production but you know science goes by evidence and fortunately till date it is not proven that wearing anything like that has any impact on sperm production. So, you Guys need not worry, wear your suit as per your desire and comfort.

**8. Hitting a gym and using testosterone or steroids to develop a muscle mass is common among young males? Does that impact fertility?**

Using testosterone or anabolic steroids may increase your muscle mass and give you a "good feel" by increasing your energy levels and libido but are very harmful for sperm production and may actually decrease those. A longer use can even make your sperms zero. So gymming is good but avoid these supplements. Consult your doctor before using them.

**9. How to keep sperms happy?**

1. Modify Lifestyle: Limit alcohol, Limit smoking, avoid fatty foods, stay fit and do a regular exercise (but do not overdo it)
2. Include fruits and veggies into your diet -they are perfect natural antioxidants
3. Avoid doing activities which has a potential to raise your scrotal temperature like sitting in hot tub for a long period, long rides on bikes, long sitting jobs (take a break in between)
4. Take a good sleep and avoid stress (yoga, meditation or simple listening to your favourite music is good)
5. Avoid supplements with testosterone or steroids. Always consult your doctor for any medication before consuming it.

**References:**

1. ASRM : Topic- Men's Health : <https://www.asrm.org/topics/topics-index/?filterbycategoryid=64>
2. <https://patient.info/mens-health>
3. <https://patient.info/doctor/infertility-male>