

Qi Medicine Fertility Support Program

Essential Support and Education for Men

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Please note that any health advice given is general in nature, and your health provider should be consulted before you begin any nutritional or health program.

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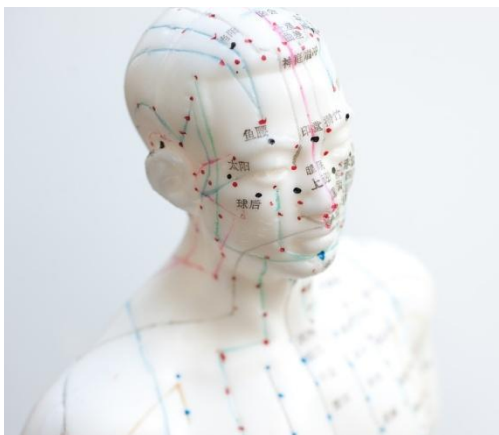


Why should men be getting Chinese Medicine Treatment alongside their partners?

The main reason - sperm. These little guys are responsible for all pregnancies and donate half of all their genetic materials to a new baby, so you guys are important.

Sperm can be healthy or unhealthy, and there are many things a man can do to help sperm quality, such as nutrition, lifestyle changes, and reducing stress. There are so many factors which affect sperm health, many of which will be discussed in this brochure.

What can Chinese Medicine do to help?



Research has shown that **Chinese Medicine** and **Acupuncture** can be effective at reducing stress, fatigue, and alleviating pain, which may be contributing to male factor infertility. Our practitioners don't just stop there. We assess your nutritional lifestyle and exercise needs to give you guidance on how you can achieve the best possible outcomes.

Unlike your regular GP or Western Fertility Specialist, we tend to spend more time assessing, understanding and guiding you through the process of achieving optimal sperm health.

We recommend you start your treatment 3 months before you want to conceive. Why is this?

Your testicles are constantly producing new sperm in a process called **spermatogenesis**. The full cycle of this process takes about 64 days or just over 2 months.

During spermatogenesis, your testicles make several million sperms per day – about 1,500 a second. By the end of a full sperm production cycle, you can regenerate up to 8 billion sperms.

This may seem like a lot, but you release anywhere from 20 to 300 million sperm cells in a single millilitre of semen. Your body maintains a surplus to ensure there's a fresh supply for conception.

Due to the time taken in sperm production, it is highly recommended you begin treatment to boost sperm quality around 2.5 months before you decide to start trying for a baby.

What is Male Infertility?

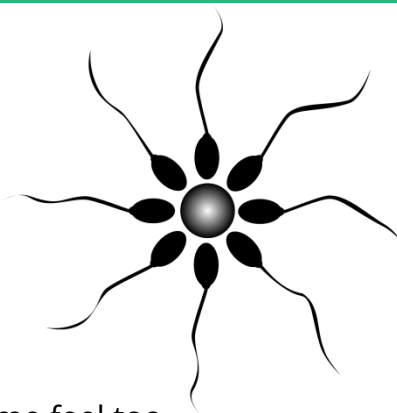
According to andrology Australia (www.andrologyaustralia.com.au), infertility is a widespread problem. For about one in five infertile couples, the problem lies solely in the male partner, and in another quarter, both partners have problems.

Unfortunately, Western Medicine has little to offer men in the treatment of most male fertility disorders, particularly where substandard sperm is the issue.

Infertility is a sensitive issue for many men, and as a result, some feel too overwhelmed or embarrassed to ask questions to their doctors and other medical practitioners. Asking questions, however, is very important to help understand what is going on with your body, and later, to recognise changes.

It is important to understand that if male fertility is an issue, it has nothing to do with that male being less virile or somehow 'not up to standard'. It is most often simply an issue of nutrition, lifestyle, or even a physical issue, such as an enlarged varicocele vein obstructing the sperm ducts.

It is so important to start with your GP to understand what may be the causing issues leading to fertility. These tests are often simple and very discreet, and will help provide you with a much clearer picture of your reproductive health. Your Chinese Medicine Doctor will work together with your GP to help overcome any issues.



How to read your Semen Analysis

To help instigate these conversations, we now have refined measurements published by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to determine whether semen analysis results are normal.

As can be seen in the table below, these measurements include volume of semen, sperm motility, sperm concentration, and sperm morphology.

PARAMETER	NORMAL RANGE
Volume of Semen	More than 1.5ml
Sperm Motility	More than 32% of the sperm are moving forward
Sperm Concentration (Number)	More than 15 million sperm per ml
Sperm Morphology (Shape)	More than 4% have a 'normal' shape (as defined by strict criteria)

The **volume of semen** is the amount of ejaculate produced in a sample after 3 to 5 days of abstinence. 1.5ml is the lowest average amount of sperm that should be able to conceive without IVF assistance.

Sperm motility refers to the amount of the sperm that are moving forward. In your tests, there will be two levels, total motility and progressive motility. Total motility should be 40% or above to have optimal chance of conceiving and 32% or higher progressive motility.

Sperm concentration is the amount of sperm per ml of semen and should be more than 15 million sperm per ml.

Most organisations and medical practitioners rely on the first three categories, leaving out the morphology (or sperm shape) due to how subjective these terms can be.

No one category is more significant than another and so it is the balance across the three main categories that will be measured and worked upon by your specialists.

Sperm Abnormalities

CAUSES

The most common physical abnormality found in men that are diagnosed as sub-fertile is a varicocele. A **varicocele** results from abnormal dilation of the veins inside the testicles. This dilation can lead to poor drainage of blood from the testes, resulting in excessive pooling of blood. More blood pooling can lead to a 'heating up' of the testes, which we know is not good for our swimmers. In this way, varicoceles can give rise to poor sperm count and/or poor morphology.

A history of infection, such as a urinary tract infection or prostatitis, can contribute to sub-fertility, leading to low sperm count and sperm motility, and the presence of white blood cells in the semen.

Some men suffer from sticky semen problems, e.g. the semen remains too coagulated (bound together) so that sperm is not released properly after ejaculation. Coagulation problems can indicate that there may be an issue with your glands (prostate gland and seminal vesicles) and possibly hint at a history of infection.

LIFESTYLE FACTORS

In addition, some lifestyle factors may negatively impact your fertility, so careful consideration of changes to the following habits can maximise your pregnancy chances:

Stop smoking: as this affects the development and quality of sperm, decreases the sperm count and reduces the volume of semen.

Restrict alcohol intake: Drinking alcohol affects sperm count, increase the number of abnormally shaped sperm, changes male hormones and can lead to impotence.⁽³⁾

Illegal drugs: such as cocaine, heroin and marijuana have been known to affect sperm count.⁽⁴⁾

Cool testes: Keep the testes cool as a high temperature can decrease sperm production and motility. Choose boxers rather than briefs and avoid extremely hot baths, showers or spas.⁽⁴⁾

A well-balanced diet: Increase amount of fresh fruit and vegetables in your diet and decrease your consumption of animal products.

Stay in a healthy weight range: Overweight men may have decreased fertility.

Exercise with caution: For example, prolonged cycling can cause damage due to the pressure on the testicles from the bike seat.

Cut back on caffeine: Even a modest amount of coffee (one or two cups daily) may decrease fertility and affect your sperm count.⁽⁵⁾

Avoid using lubricants: as they often contain chemicals that can damage or kill sperm.

Electromagnetic radiation: from mobile phones and laptops is associated with hormone changes and long hours of use can reduce fertility. Do not keep your mobile phone in the side pocket of your trousers and try to limit its use.

Avoid toxins: including heavy metals such as lead and mercury, and pesticides on food.

Discuss your medications: with your healthcare provider, and how they may be affecting your fertility.

Reduce stress: Infertility causes stress and in a cruel vicious cycle, stress has been shown to reduce sperm quality. Regular acupuncture is a good way to reduce stress hormones.

Western treatment of male fertility

Western medicine, unfortunately, is restricted when it comes to improving sperm quality and quantity, and management of male infertility in most cases can be seen as incomplete.

Clomiphene citrate is sometimes prescribed for 3-4 months which can improve sperm count to a certain extent. It does, however, not improve sperm motility or morphology, and no studies suggest increased fertility. Antibiotics are prescribed if an infection is found, and can be effective in those cases.

ASSISTED REPRODUCTION: IVF AND ICSI FOR FERTILITY

In the current Western medical approach, it is common for doctors to want to circumnavigate natural fertility all together and head straight into IVF (In Vitro Fertilisation) and ICSI (Intracytoplasmic Sperm Injection).

IVF is the process by which an egg and sperm are joined together outside the body in a specialised laboratory. The egg and sperm are left to fertilise 'naturally', that is, the sperm will need to make its own way to the egg. The developing fertilised egg is then placed inside the uterus and encouraged to grow into a baby.

In ICSI, sperm Injection is performed as an additional part of an IVF treatment cycle where a single sperm is injected into each egg to assist fertilisation using very fine micro-manipulation equipment. The technicians actually select the strongest 'swimmers' and inject them directly into the egg. This is often used when male factor infertility is more of an issue.

CAN'T I JUST RELY ON IVF AND ICSI TO OVERCOME MY FERTILITY ISSUES?



As wonderful as these advancements in modern medicine are, we still do not have the ability to improve the health and strength of a sperm in a petri dish. Therefore, by doing all you can to help improve your health and wellbeing with nutrition, lifestyle, and Chinese Medicine, you are helping to give your natural or assisted fertility a boost. This could potentially save you thousands of dollars and

many years of trying, as you will be giving your little one the best chance of survival.

Diet and supplements supporting sperm health

It is well understood that a healthy diet helps improve sperm health in males. A recent meta-analysis of several studies done on sperm health and diet showed that the sperm benefitted from diets rich in: ⁽⁶⁾

- Omega-3 fatty acids
- Some antioxidants (vitamin E, vitamin C, β -carotene, selenium, zinc, cryptoxanthin and lycopene, vitamin D and folate)
- Low in saturated fatty acids and trans-fatty acids
- Fish, shellfish and seafood
- Poultry
- Cereals
- Vegetables and fruits
- Low-fat dairy and skimmed milk

Sperm was adversely affected by diets containing:

- Processed meat
- Red meat
- Soy foods
- Potatoes
- Full-fat dairy and total dairy products
- Cheese
- Coffee
- Alcohol
- Sugar-sweetened beverages and sweets
- High intake of alcohol



ACUPUNCTURE, HERBS AND SUPPLIMENTS:

Everyone is so individual!

To ensure you receive a treatment specifically tailored for your constitution, please book your consultation with your Chinese Medicine doctor at Qi Medicine.

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