

# **LIFESTYLE AND FERTILITY**



There are a number of factors that can impact upon an individual's fertility. If you are thinking about having children, or are trying to get pregnant, it may be helpful to look at your current lifestyle. Aspects that can affect your fertility include:

## **Age**

- Female and male fertility decreases from the age of 35;
- 60% of pregnancies over the age of 45 do not produce a live birth.

## **Smoking**

- Smoking increases the risk of infertility in men and women;
- It can affect male erectile function;
- Women who smoke take longer to conceive;
- It can also have a negative effect on sperm motility and morphology;
- Sperm counts of smokers are on average 13-17% lower than that of non-smokers; and
- There is a greater likelihood of spontaneous abortion in women who smoke.

## **Weight**

- Being underweight can inhibit or stop the menstrual cycle;
- A person's BMI should be kept between 20 and 24 – Too much deviation from this can lead to a disruption in healthy ovulation.
- High levels of fat can disturb hormone production, cause irregular periods;

## **Alcohol**

- One to five glasses of wine a week can affect fertility;
- The use of alcohol inhibits ovulation.

## **Stress**

- A busy lifestyle usually means couples have less opportunity for sex;
- Infrequent intercourse can also cause sperm counts to drop.

## **Heat**

- Excessive heat can effect sperm production, as such on should avoid using electric blankets and spas and avoid wearing tight fitting pants.



## Use of Prescription or Recreational Drugs

- Recreational drug use and the use of some prescribed medications can harm sperm quality.

## Pollutants

- Exposure to chemicals, heavy metals, pesticides, chemotherapy and x-ray therapy can be toxic to sperm and eggs.

## Lubricants

- Lubricants such as K-Y Jelly, Surgilube and Alpha Keri lotion contain bacteriostatic agents which can affect sperm motility;
- Saliva is toxic to sperm.



For more information on this subject or any other **women's health** or **mental health issue** please contact us on (08) 9227 8122, or toll free on 1800 998 399

For information on issues specific to **Indigenous health** or for **drug and alcohol** related issues please contact us on (08) 9227 9032, or toll free on 1800 246 655