



the acupuncture IVF support clinic

Male Factor Infertility

If your semen analysis was less than perfect, you are not alone. Male infertility is the most common reason for couples attending an IVF clinic. However IVF/ICSI is not a cure for male infertility – it is a bypass procedure. But the good news is that there is a lot that you can do to improve your sperm. You may need to change some aspects of your diet and lifestyle for a few months – but you will feel better for it and if your sperm respond well then you may not need to use IVF.

Alcohol

There is no doubt that heavy alcohol consumption has a deleterious effect on sperm count and function, but moderate drinking seems to do no harm. If you have a hot constitution your acupuncturist will advise you to avoid some types of alcohol.

Smoking

All studies have shown deleterious effects of tobacco or marijuana on sperm. If you are having difficulty giving up, talk to us about using acupuncture to deal with withdrawal symptoms and cravings.

Coffee

A little bit is fine for most men but too much (3 cups a day) has been shown to damage sperm DNA. If you have a hot constitution, coffee intake should be limited.

Weight Loss

A high BMI (being overweight) is associated with decreased testosterone and increased oestrogen, neither of which are good for your sperm count or quality. Now is a good time to start a weight loss programme. Acupuncture can help control your appetite and accelerate weight loss.

Exercise

Avoid excessive cycling or prolonged overheating, but otherwise keep up regular exercise.

Sex

Frequent sex improves the quality of sperm in an ejaculate, while a few days abstinence increases the quantity of sperm. If your partner knows when she ovulates then sex daily around this time is recommended. If not, then it is advisable to have sex every second day from when the period finishes and continue for 10 days (or more if your partner has a long cycle). If libido or performance on demand is an issue speak to your practitioner about how acupuncture and herbs can help.

Fumes

We know that men exposed to chemicals or fumes at their work place have lower sperm counts and poorer morphology. Try and limit exposure at work and at home.

Varicocele and anti-sperm antibodies

A number of clinical studies have shown the beneficial effect of acupuncture and Chinese herbs in improving sperm quality and fertility in both these conditions.

Stress

Infertility causes stress and in a cruel vicious cycle, stress has been shown to reduce sperm quality. Manage stress by taking some time each day to relax or exercise, and make sure you get enough sleep. Regular acupuncture reduces stress hormones.

Supplements

Seminal fluid needs high levels of antioxidants to protect the sperm from oxidative damage to sperm membranes and DNA during their 90 day development. Zinc, vitamins E and C, CoQ10, selenium and carnitine have all been shown to improve sperm quality, as have a number of Chinese herbs.

Diet

You don't need to follow any special or restrictive diets; just eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables and have adequate protein. Eat organic foods where possible.

Clothing

Sperm manufacture works better at cooler temperatures (which is why the testicles are carried outside the body). Hence men are advised to avoid wearing tight jeans and tight underpants.

Acupuncture

Seven clinical trials in a number of different countries have all shown a significant improvement in sperm morphology and motility after a course of acupuncture. 10 - 15 treatments are given over a period of 5 - 10 weeks.