

6 Fertility Superfoods and 5 Foods to avoid

1. Flax seeds

B vitamins, magnesium and manganese.

They also contain phytoestrogens (plant estrogens) known as lignans, which block harmful xenoestrogens (synthetic chemicals in the environment which have estrogenic properties) in the body.

High in both Omega 3 and 6 essential fatty acids which your body needs to balance hormone

All in all, flax seeds are a powerful package for balancing hormones and boosting fertility.

Aim to get about two tablespoons of flax seeds every day; grind them up for maximum benefit. Try sprinkling over oatmeal or a salad, or blending into a smoothie.

2. Gou qi berries

Are a traditional Chinese herb - you can buy them in healthfood stores and eat them as you would raisins.

They are full of anti-oxidants and have been shown to increase sperm counts.

They also have been shown to promote follicle development in women who are having trouble ovulating.

3. Yams

A Chinese herb.

They act as anti-estrogens fooling the brain into thinking that there isn't enough estrogen and so getting you to produce more.

There is research from Nigeria that shows that women who eat a lot of yams have an increase in the incidence of twins

4. Leafy Greens

Full of folic acid which prevents certain birth defects

Folic acid is an essential ingredient in healthy sperm and health eggs

Leafy greens are also high in iron and so help build a good endometrial lining

5. Sprouts

Chinese Medicine particularly prizes sprouting grains, legumes and seeds. They are in the process of changing from yin (the seed) to yang (the sprout), and the dynamic balance struck is thought to be particularly nourishing to couples trying to develop their very own sprouts.

If you prefer a more grounded explanation of the fertility benefits of sprouts, eating sprouts encourages an alkaline (rather than acidic) environment in your body. That includes the cervical mucus, which must be alkaline for sperm to survive in it.

6. Cruciferous Vegetables

Broccoli, kale, cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts

Contain a phytonutrient called DIM which helps with estrogen metabolism and prevents fibroids and endometriosis.

Foods to avoid

Trans fats

The first thing to understand is that there are two types of trans fats. One is found naturally in very small amounts in animal products and the other is made artificially. Its this latter one we should be avoiding.

Food manufacturers make them by adding hydrogen to oil - they don't do this to make food taste better they do it so it will last longer on the shelves.

They raise your LDL which is your bad cholesterol and lower your HDL which is your good cholesterol - so their bad for your heart but they also seem to stop women from ovulating.

Harvard Medical School study showed an increase of just two percent of calories coming from trans fats sent the risk of ovulatory infertility up 73 percent.

If you are not eating anything processed you won't have to worry about trans fats because they are only found in factory produced food such as frozen meals and cookies and cakes - look for the words hydrogenised or partially hydrogenised on the label.

Highly refined grains.

Here in the US we are in the habit of refining grains for the sake of convenience - refined grains cook quicker and keep longer in the cupboard

The refining process strips 17 key nutrients from grains. Among those lost are several that boost fertility, such as antioxidants, B vitamins and iron.

Caffeine

Can decrease the flow of blood to the uterus, which can interfere with implantation. Studies on caffeine and fertility are inconclusive, but you'd do best to avoid it if your fertility issues fall in this area. Everyone else should consider reducing their caffeine intake to the equivalent of about one cup of regular brewed coffee per day. (Or, about two cups of black tea or three of green tea.)