

How Body Fat Can Affect Conception

Today in the 1990's, many women are battling motherhood and being in the home over their career and the self satisfaction that comes along with both. The bodies on the covers of Vogue, Glamour, and Shape magazine are staring us in the face but yet our hormones are screaming "shutdown." Unfortunately, the body that is depicted as being totally fit and sexy is not always the same body that is fit for pregnancy.



Fortunately, many reproductive endocrinologists have been able to help many women conceive without giving up their bodies they have worked so hard to obtain. However, the level of body fat your body has does play a huge role in conception. The more fat cells your body retains, the more estrogen your body will produce. Estrogen is the hormone converted from the adrenal hormone androgen, which is one of the key hormones for egg production. Without egg production and release, you cannot get pregnant.

The first consideration many women who are thinking about having children should consider is how intense their workouts are and how many calories are being consumed. Doctors are finding that it is not necessarily your weight that could be stopping you from conceiving but your body fat. Elite athletes who train many hours seven days a week would scientifically have more difficulty getting pregnant than a woman who sits behind a desk all day. The athletes calorie expenditure and metabolic rate are much higher. Unfortunately, the more intense the workout is, the more calories and ultimately, the more fat the body will burn. Of course, we must consider how many daily calories one is eating to determine if there is a deficit or not. On the flip side, too many fat cells in the body can over produce estrogen and hinder conception. The odds of this being a problem are rare.

Many studies have been performed with women being asked to gain weight to reach their ideal fertility weight. One study was completed by Dr. G. William Bates, a professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Medical University in South Carolina at Charleston. Dr. Bates asked women to gain weight to raise their estrogen level. Each woman worked to gain 1/2 to 1 pound per week resulting in about an average of 8.2 pounds per person. Twenty four of the twenty six women became pregnant within 1-3 years following the increased body fat. No drugs or surgery were needed to achieve ovulation or conception.

In conclusion, thousands of women every day seek fertility advice and are diagnosed with reproductive problems. However, before making a decision that you are infertile by reading all the books or panicking because you are not getting pregnant, take a look at some areas in which you can change quickly and safely. Modify your workouts and keep a log of your food intake. You just might be able to solve your problems in the privacy of your own home.

Here are some foods that are suggested to help you reach your ideal fertility weight:

- pasta
- whole milk
- fruit
- fish
- cheese
- ice cream
- milk shakes
- beer

Some suggestions for working out that will help promote hormone production (of course in moderation) are: swimming, dancing, light weight training and aerobics, walking, stretching and bicycling.

*Always seek advise from your physician on fertility and your body weight.