Sperm antibodies are becoming more common. 20% of all cases of infertility are due to mutual infertility, and 20% due to unexplained infertility. Combined, that's nearly half of all the cases of infertility!

If the woman is ovulating, doesn't have blocked tubes, hormonal imbalances or other reproductive system conditions, and, the man has normal sperm parameters, what's the problem?

**Why can't they get pregnant?**

1. Presence of sperm antibodies
2. Toxic mucus
3. Food intolerances

The first test you should consider is a post-coital test. This test will show how many sperm are still alive after intercourse in the woman's reproductive system.

If the woman has sperm antibodies in her mucus, or has overly acidic mucus due to toxin overload in the body then the sperm will not fare well and their minutes (not days) will be numbered.

**Channels of elimination**

You see, your body will rely on all possible channels of elimination when it comes to getting rid of toxins. They are mostly mucus and discharge producing organs such as the nose, lungs, skin, kidneys, gut, vagina and penis.

This is where detoxing comes into the picture. Each couple, regardless of whether you are infertile or not should consider detoxing before conception.

Heavy metals exposure has a detrimental impact on the immune system, especially on autoantibody production which can lead to infertility in susceptible individuals. One study found that patients with mercury allergy had more antisperm antibodies than patients without the mercury allergy. (Neuro. Endocrinol. Lett. 2005)

**Food intolerances and sperm antibodies**

If the immune system is in overdrive (due to constant exposure to food you are intolerant to) it can adversely react to your partner's sperm and/or fertilized egg and destroy it. This can lead to creation of antibodies to your partner's sperm and can predispose you to miscarriages and still births.
In the case of food intolerances you will not necessarily know you've got one until you do a proper blood test or you simply eliminate the food from your diet and wait to see if the symptoms go away. It can take up to 3 months for the immunocomplexes (antibody and antigen sticking together) to clear from your system.

Our body is one closed circuit. Everything that enters your body: through air that you breathe, food and drinks you consume or lotions and potions you rub on your skin will affect every single cell in your body! It all ends up in your blood. Your blood carries it though kilometers of blood vessels from the biggest aorta to the tiniest capillaries barely visible to the eye. Just think about that, for a second.

And the next time you want to consume something you know is not healthy just remember the closed circuit and know that it won't just come out without leaving any damage behind.

**Sperm Antibodies in the mucus**

If the woman's mucus contains sperm antibodies, more than just a detox is required. Studies have shown that women can develop antisperm antibodies if sperm has come into contact with the mucosal or systemic immune system. This can happen if there are minor wounds in the vagina, rectum or the oral cavity. Sperm antibodies in cervical mucus cause the heads of the sperm to stick to the cervical mucus.

To treat sperm antibodies in the mucus you'll need to use condoms for 3-6 months while the woman's immune system is addressed with diet, nutritional supplements, herbs and other complementary medicine treatments as required.

During the 3-6 month period, because the woman didn't come into contact with the sperm, the present antibodies to sperm will be broken down and no new ones will be produced.

This is also a very beneficial time to learn about timing your most fertile days!

Then you remove the condom and have intercourse at the most fertile time to conceive. This will not allow enough time for your body to produce new antibodies. Also after having your immune system treated and retrained during those 3-6 months it is likely that your immune system would not react again.

If the woman has sperm antibodies in her blood and not just the mucus, than just relying on the condom will not be enough and a longer immune system treatment may be required.

**Men can have sperm auto antibodies**

Autoimmunity results from the abnormal immune response against the body's own tissue. Men can develop antibodies against their own sperm. This can cause the sperm to agglutinate (or stick together) or cause the tails of the sperm to stick to the cervical mucus.

Autoimmunity of any kind often derives from childhood or even earlier development in the womb. If the mother was consuming foods she was intolerant to during her pregnancy, then her antibodies influenced what type of immune system dominance the child will have.
The immune system is fascinating in that it needs to learn the ropes. Unlike the other cells in the body it intimately interacts with our environment everyday.

If you have an inflamed gut, due to a bacterial or parasitic infection or as a result of food intolerance, large molecules from food will enter the sterile environment behind the gut, through the gaps between the cells. Once they are in the area of the body they are not meant to be in, the immune system will pick them up and treat them as invading pathogens. Now that the immune system has been exposed to this substance once, it’ll produce a whole army of antibodies against this food. So now each time you eat this food, they'll attack. Overtime this will exhaust the immune reserve, making it less robust when it comes to bacteria, viruses and cancers and more hypersensitive to its own tissue and innocuous substances such as pollen and food.

This starts a viscous cycle if the food intolerance is not picked up upon and treated naturopathically.

If as a child you were not breastfed, than you may have missed out on your mother's antibodies and this may have predisposed you to an immune system that is overly reactive. If, on the other hand you mother has many allergies, then you can consider yourself lucky for not having been breastfed.

Also if you grew up in a super clean and sterile environment, your immune system didn't have any bugs to learn from. Some childhood diseases and contact with dirt as a kid are very beneficial for the immune system. They teach your immune system what sort of antibodies it should be producing, so it's less likely to attack food molecules or your own tissue.

The good news is that the immune system can be retrained in three easy steps;

1. Remove the triggers for 3-6 months or longer, depending on the severity.
2. Heal the inflammation and the mucosal surfaces, with the right nutrients and diet.
3. Treat the immune system with adequate protein intake, a clean and pure diet, nutritional supplements, probiotics and herbs. Key nutrients to consider are vitamin C, zinc, selenium, vitamins E and A (or betacarotene), omega 3, and herbs such as Panax ginseng, Echinacea, Hemidesmus, Astragalus, Withania and Saw palmetto.

In this article we looked the causes of sperm antibodies and touched on unexplained infertility as it relates to food intolerances. There are plenty of other environmental influences that can contribute to unexplained infertility. Natural fertility treatment for sperm antibodies consists of abstinence from the triggers, dietary and lifestyle adjustments and nutritional and herbal support for the immune system. Once you truly grasp the interconnectedness of all body systems you'll understand why and how what you eat, drink and breathe can make all the difference to your fertility.

Could sperm antibodies be affecting your ability to conceive? Have considered testing for sperm antibodies? Share your thoughts!

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