

How to Increase Fertility Over 40

by Kathryn Moloney ND. - Qualified Naturopathic Physician - Friday, June 16, 2017

<https://natural-fertility-prescription.com/trying-to-conceive-over-40/>

If you're trying to conceive (TTC) and nearing towards, or are over 40, my guess is that you are looking for all the information that you can find to improve your chances of conceiving. Well, you've come to the right place! In this article, I'll endeavor to provide you with the information and resources that will best equip you to become empowered and proactive in improving your health and fertility; and increase your chances of trying to conceive when you're over 40.

15 Blood Tests If You're Trying to Increase Fertility Over 40

The first thing I recommend you do is get some tests done. This will give you information about your nutrient status, your fertility and some genetic issues that may affect your ability to conceive. Yes, you could try to conceive for a bit and have tests done later if you don't conceive. However, equipping yourself with the insight into your health and fertility now (and ironing out any issues) will potentially reduce the time spent trying to conceive.

1. FBE – Full blood examination
2. General STD test
3. Rubella
4. LFT – Liver function test
5. Iron studies
6. Fasting glucose
7. Cholesterol
8. Thyroid function – including antibodies
9. Folate/B12
10. Vitamin D
11. Pap smear
12. Day 2 Oestrogen, FSH, LH, testosterone, prolactin
13. Day 21 progesterone
14. AMH
15. Plus a bacterial cervical swab to test for Ureaplasma and Mycoplasma

If you have experienced a miscarriage, add:

1. Lupus coagulant
2. ANA (antinuclear antibodies)
3. Antithrombin
4. MTHFR gene mutation
5. Factor V Leiden
6. Homocysteine
7. Karyotyping – of both woman and man

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When you go back to your doctor to discuss the results of your tests, it is important that you get a printout of all of your results. Some doctors can miss an important issue or not think it's important (or don't know what to do about it), so it's imperative that you have your results to show to your Fertility Naturopath and/or Gynecologist/Fertility specialist. Also, there are many tests here that your GP may not have experience in referring for, so you therefore need to see a Naturopath who specializes in fertility to help you interpret and treat these deficiencies/issues. If they are left untreated, the time to conception may be much longer and the possibility of miscarriage increased.

Folate and Fertility

Most people know that Folate is essential to take before you become pregnant, but not everyone knows that **it should be taken 3-4 months before conceiving**. This is because the egg and sperm (yes, men need to take folate also) are maturing and developing for 3-4 months before they are released. During this time, they are creating the genetic material for the child, and folate is an essential nutrient in healthy chromosomal development. You might have heard of the MTHFR gene mutation? If not, this is a mutation of a gene that allows you to convert folate into a more readily absorbable form. And it's more common than you might think. The **incidence may be up to 70%**^[1] in certain populations. Speak to your Fertility Naturopath about what form of folate is the right one for you.

Fertility Over 40 for Guys

There are two sets of chromosomes that make a baby. Although the guys don't get talked about much when it comes to fertility, the **health of their sperm is just as important as the amount and quality of the eggs**. To ascertain the health of their sperm (the amount, shape, speed, DNA health) all they need to do is get a referral to a Fertility clinic and produce a sample of their swimmers! If they protest, just let them know that this could potentially reduce the chance of you needing to go through invasive and expensive procedures and increase the chances and reduce the time it takes to conceive (and potentially reduce your chance of miscarriage). And if they are worried about what the test might show, reassure them that there are lots of measures that can be taken to address poor sperm health. What if the results show that there is an issue with the sperm? Make an appointment with a Fertility Naturopath. Or, you can enroll in the [NFP Fertility Coaching Program](#) to find where the issues lie. The program will also suggest a course of action to improve the health of the sperm.

How to Prevent the Setback of a Miscarriage

The physical and emotional toll of a miscarriage can be enormous. The excitement and future planning of pregnancy can change to heartache and disappointment within a few hours. And by the time you are ready to conceive again after dealing with this loss, months can pass by and you are back to the beginning of trying to conceive, but with added anxiety. So doing everything you can to try to prevent a miscarriage when you are nearing, or over 40 is going to be a good move. I could write a whole article on how to prevent a miscarriage (and I shall do!) but what follows are some basic things to consider.

Tips for preventing a miscarriage

- There are some tests listed above that are recommended for women who have experienced a

miscarriage. However, it will be difficult to get your doctor to refer you to them if you haven't experienced one. So, I recommend that you have these tests done through a private company (which your Fertility Naturopath can refer you for). They may be expensive, but in my opinion, it's well worth it.

- Follow a 3-4 month preconception diet and lifestyle program
- Have a consultation with a Fertility Naturopath or join up to the [NFP Fertility Coaching Program](#)
- Have your guy's sperm checked out

Supplements to Increase Fertility Over 40

There are many supplements that can improve fertility and increase the chances of conceiving when you are over 40. But, I recommend that you see a Naturopath and have them prescribe the right ones for you. Why, I hear you ask? If you put 'supplements for fertility' into Google (if you haven't already) you will receive over 6 million results of different pages giving you suggestions of what to take when you are trying to conceive! The information is all there, so why wouldn't you head to your local chemist/supplement shop or buy them online? Why would you need to see a professional to tell you what to take? There are some very good reasons.

I'll list a few:

- **The natural health industry is a growth industry and many manufacturers are getting on board to get a share.** So most off the shelf products are of substandard quality (due in part to lack of regulation). The best quality supplements are those that are classified as 'practitioner-only' and are only available to practitioners for prescribing to their patients. These companies have been manufacturing these products for many years and have perfected their products. They are also higher dosages, correct and pure ingredients, and more absorbable forms than what you can buy off the shelf.
- **Even though they are available over the counter, supplements can interact with pharmaceutical medication.** So unless a professional prescribes your supplements, you run the risk of interactions. Supplements can also interact with each other! Some minerals prevent the absorption of other minerals, so if you take them together, you'll be wasting your money.
- **Just because a website says that something is good for fertility, it doesn't mean that it's good for YOUR fertility!** For example, something that is advertised as fertility-boosting might increase ovulation, but your issue might not be ovulation, but poor egg quality.
- **Dosage. When it comes to supplements, the dosage is everything.** If you don't take enough of a supplement and don't reach the therapeutic dose, there is no point in taking the supplement. But taking too much can be dangerous. A professional will be able to recommend the dose that is correct for YOUR situation.

The practitioner-only supplements might be a bit more expensive, but in the long run, you'll have better results and have a higher chance of ending up with the outcome you want.

Diet and Lifestyle to Increase Fertility Naturally

When it comes to dietary and lifestyle recommendations for women trying to conceive, the general rule is

that the older the woman or man is, or the more fertility issues they have experienced, the more diligent they need to be with eating a healthy diet and living a healthy lifestyle. A summary of what to aim for is to:

- Eat a whole food Mediterranean diet consisting of organic fruit and vegetables, gluten-free whole grains (brown rice, gluten-free oats), legumes, organic meat and dairy, fish, olive oil, nuts and seeds
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, cigarettes, sugar
- Drink 6-8 glasses of filtered water every day
- Reduce consumption of wheat and gluten-containing products (bread, biscuits and pasta)
- Replace your chemical cleaners and personal care products with natural ones
- Reduce your exposure to radiation – keep your mobile phone away from your body, turn your wifi off at night and avoid flying while trying to conceive
- Regular exercise

For more in-depth information consult your Fertility Naturopath or fertility program.

Acupuncture

A review of studies into Acupuncture found that women who were trying to conceive and used Acupuncture over a 4-month period had a 3.5 greater likelihood of achieving pregnancy. The studies also showed a 50% pregnancy rate, whereas IVF only had 30%.^[2] Wow. That's an incentive to get over that fear of needles and make an appointment with your local Acupuncturist! As Naturopath's who specializes in Fertility, we recommend that clients see an Acupuncturist alongside our treatment program, as we believe this combination gives the best outcomes.

Exercise

Research into exercise shows that high-intensity interval training (HIIT) is one of the most effective means of reversing the age-related cellular decline. It may rejuvenate cells in the body, plus increase [mitochondria](#). The WHO suggests 2.5 hours/week of vigorous exercise, so that's just 30 minutes 5 x week.^[3] But if high-intensity exercise isn't your thing, any exercise done regularly will help to increase blood circulation, build muscle tone, reduce stress and anxiety and improve fitness, which are all beneficial for your health and fertility. The WHO suggests that adults do 2.5-5 hours of moderate-intensity exercise over the week.^[3] This could be 30-60 minutes 5 x days/week.

Egg Quality

Egg quality is one of the most important aspects of getting pregnant naturally over 40. For further information and recommendations, you may want to have a read of my article [Does CoQ10 Improve Egg Quality & Age-Related Infertility?](#) .

Know Your Ovulation

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When there is only egg being released every month (and it only sticks around for 12-24 hours), it's imperative that you know when you are ovulating, so that the sperm is there to meet it. Pinpointing your ovulation may be harder than you might imagine. If you read something that says that everyone ovulates on day 14, or halfway through your cycle, this is simply not true. And the app that you are using might not be spot on either. Speak to your Fertility Naturopath about recording and interpreting your charts, so that you can recognize your signs of ovulation and increase your chances of conceiving in every cycle.

To Wrap it Up

There are many success stories of women conceiving naturally in their 40's, so don't let the statistics scare you! Your chances of getting pregnant at 40 naturally (and into your early 40's) are probably better than the statistics suggest. This is because most of the statistics on age and fertility are based on fertility clinic clients and not natural conception rates in the wider population. Moreover, you can increase your chances of having a healthy baby by following the recommendations above and getting support from a Naturopath who specializes in Fertility and joining up to the Natural Fertility Prescription Program. If you're trying to get pregnant at 40 or above and doing everything listed above, and you still haven't conceived after 6 months (using timed intercourse), my recommendation is to **make an appointment with a Fertility Specialist**. They will most likely recommend more tests and talk about what else can be done to help the process along. Have you tried to conceive over 40? And if so, what has been your experience and what worked for you? We'd love to hear from you.

References

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