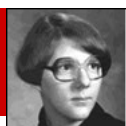




Friday, July 18, 2008



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FEMALE fertility starts to nosedive after the age of 35 – but the biological clock ticks for men too.

A French study of more than 12,000 couples this week found miscarriage rates start to climb when the dad-to-be is older than 35, and rise sharply after 40.

The miscarriage rate was 16.7 per cent per pregnancy when men were aged 30 to 34 and climbed to 19.5 per cent between 35 and 39.

For men aged 40 to 45 it was 32.5 per cent and for men over 45 it was 32.4 per cent.

Their partner's pregnancy rates also fall when men hit their forties. But it's not all bad news.

There are plenty of things you can do to boost fertility.

The Sun's GP, Dr Carol Cooper, says: "If you're a woman over 35 or a man over 40, it's a good idea to get on with it.

But most couples will get pregnant within a year if they eat and sleep well, exercise regularly, don't smoke and don't drink to excess.

The most important thing is not to worry if you're having problems – stress will only make things worse."

Here are Sun Health's tips for boosting baby chances.

His

• **DON'T SMOKE:** Two-thirds of cigarette smokers in a US study had a 75 per cent decline in fertility compared to nonsmokers.

Scientists at the University of Buffalo in New York also found that men who smoke marijuana frequently are more likely to have abnormal sperm and a lower total sperm count.

• **WATCH YOUR WEIGHT:** One study found being 20lb overweight cut fertility by ten per cent. Scots doctors found high BMI is linked to less semen and poor sperm.

• **DON'T OVERHEAT:** There's truth in the old wives' tale that men trying to conceive should avoid hot baths.

Sperm are at their best a couple of degrees below body temperature.

A study at the University of California showed that sperm production was drastically impaired when subjects took lots of hot baths, while another US study suggested that long term use of laptop computers positioned on the lap could affect fertility.

• **EAT FOLATE-RICH FOODS:** Like green leafy



Baby boost ... follow our tips

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Hers

- **EAT ICE CREAM:** US researchers found women who ate at least one serving of high-fat dairy food a day reduced their risk of infertility by more than 27 per cent.

Switch to low-fat versions after you get pregnant to avoid piling on the pounds.

- **AVOID ALCOHOL:** Danish researchers found that women drinking five units or less a week were twice as likely to conceive within six months than women drinking ten units or more.
- **DON'T SMOKE:** This is especially important if you're undergoing IVF.

A French study found women who smoke more than ten a day had only a 15 per cent chance of

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