



**tip** At-home fertility tests

If you're having trouble conceiving, you may want to consider fertility testing. Both men and women can use at-home tests. Ask your doctor for suggestions on which may be best for you.

Men can learn how many motile sperm (those that can swim to an egg) they're producing. These tests are about 95 percent accurate.

Talk with your doctor if you have any questions about the results of an at-home fertility test.

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**Men's health**

Current Article

**Men: Boost your fertility**

It may sound obvious, but getting pregnant involves teamwork. If you and your partner are planning for a family, there's a lot you can do to increase your chances of a healthy, successful pregnancy. In fact, researchers are discovering that men can take steps to maximize fertility.



The American Pregnancy Association and other experts recommend that you follow these five steps:

- 1. Eat right.** A healthful diet that includes a variety of whole grains, fruits and vegetables can help increase the chances of fertility. Taking a multivitamin may improve reproductive health, too.
- 2. Step on the scale.** Being at a healthy weight may increase your fertility. In a study of nearly 1,600 Danish men, those who had a body mass index (BMI) between 20 and 25 had a sperm count significantly higher than men who were outside that range. BMI is a tool that uses weight and height to help assess body fat.

These BMI ranges apply to most adults:

- Underweight is less than 18.5.
- Healthy weight is 18.5 to 24.9.
- Overweight is 25 to 29.9.
- Obese is 30 or higher.

Your doctor can calculate your BMI, or you can find your own by using the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute online calculator at <http://www.nhlbisupport.com/bmi>.

**3. Keep cool.** Overheating below the belt can lower your sperm count. So, take a break from hot tubs, saunas, electric blankets, heating pads and long, hot showers. Try wearing looser clothes, too — boxers instead of briefs, for example. This may help nature cool things down.

**4. Review your medicines and medical treatments.** Some, including the following, can affect fertility by lowering sperm count or quality:

- Cimetidine, sulfasalazine or nitrofurantoin, which are used to treat ulcers, gastrointestinal problems and urinary tract infections
- Steroids, such as prednisone and cortisone, which are used to treat asthma, arthritis and skin conditions
- Chemotherapy and radiation for cancer

Talk with your doctor about any medicine you take. He or she can offer advice and, if necessary, alternatives.

**5. Change unhealthy habits or environments.** Alcohol, cigarettes and illegal drugs can change the shape and movement of sperm and lower sperm count. Exposure to radiation, pesticides or other chemicals also can lower fertility.

Your doctor can help you be as healthy as possible when you're trying to conceive. Consider scheduling an appointment if you and your partner are planning on a family.

**Resources for men**

Discover more at [PacifiCare.com](http://PacifiCare.com). Log in as a PacifiCare member, then click on the "Online Health Information" link at the bottom of the right sidebar, and enter your selected topic in the search field.

**Men's health**

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