

How to Improve Egg Quality for Pregnancy

If you're trying to conceive, you may be wondering how to improve the quality of your eggs and increase your chances of getting pregnant. Ovulation is an extremely important part in the formula for a healthy pregnancy, and thankfully,...

Increasing the Quality of Your Eggs

1. **Cut back on how much alcohol you consume on a daily basis.** Alcohol may have a negative impact on your chances of getting pregnant, and completely abstaining from drinking may give you the highest chance of conceiving. If you're not willing to cut out all drinking, try to not have more than 1-5 drinks a week at the most.^[1]
 1. Drinking has been linked to a higher chance of developing an ovulation disorder.^[2]
 2. Try substituting your normal alcoholic drink for a fun mocktail—just because you're not drinking or are drinking less doesn't mean you can't still have a nice beverage!
2. **Limit your caffeine intake to 200 milligrams of coffee, or 1-2 cups, per day.** Depending on how much you rely on your daily cup of coffee to get going each day, this may be a hard habit to adjust to. If you drink more than the recommended amount, try cutting back gradually until you're having just 1-2 cups each day.^[3]
 1. High doses of caffeine have been linked to difficulties getting pregnant, as well as a higher chance of having a miscarriage.^[4]
 2. Consider switching out your normal coffee for decaf, half-caf, or even black or green tea.
3. **Avoid using any forms of tobacco to keep your eggs healthy.** Smoking can make your ovaries age faster and cause you to lose eggs more quickly than you would otherwise. If you need help cutting out tobacco, talk to your doctor.^[5]
 1. Think of it this way—you'd be highly encouraged to stop using tobacco while pregnant, so this is a great opportunity to both increase your chances of conceiving while also preparing for pregnancy.
4. **Manage stress in a healthy way to improve the quality of your eggs.** Whether it's going for a long walk, calling a friend, or watching a comedic movie, do whatever you need to at the end of each day to destress. It can be extremely hard not to fret when you're trying to conceive, and sometimes being told not to stress can make it even worse! Just do your best to tackle each day as it comes and find ways that personally help you lower your stress.^[6]
 1. When you're stressed, your body produces cortisol. Cortisol can negatively affect your ovaries, follicles, and oocytes, which can all contribute to poor egg quality.
 2. If you're dealing with extreme stress, consider talking with your doctor or a therapist. They may be able to help you come up with some tools to work through your stress and anxiety.^[7]
5. **Keep your exercise at a moderate level rather than over-exercising.** When you exercise a lot, especially if it's vigorous exercise, your body may not ovulate like it normally would. Try to keep that vigorous type of movement to 5 hours or less each week, or consider modifying your workouts to be less intense.^[8]

1. Vigorous exercise is when you are breathing deeply and fast, start sweating soon after you begin your workout, and you can't talk or say more than a couple of words without having to stop to take another breath.^[9]
2. If you're calculating your heart rate, you're in a vigorous state if you're hitting 70-85% of your maximum heart rate.^[10]
6. **Steer clear of toxins and pollutants to protect the quality of your eggs.** As much as you can, avoid chemicals, pesticides, tobacco smoke, exhaust, dry-cleaning solvents, and other toxins. If you do have to be around any air pollutants, try to stay in a well-ventilated area and get as much fresh air as you can.^[11]
 1. Pollutants may disrupt your menstrual cycle, making it harder for you to get pregnant.^[12]
 2. Household cleaners often give off strong odors and contain chemicals that could be problematic. If you can, consider switching to natural cleaning products.^[13]

Supporting Healthy Fertility

1. **Maintain a healthy weight to promote regular ovulation.** Talk to your doctor about your ideal weight for your height and body-frame. Having too much or too little body fat can negatively affect your chances of getting pregnant and may have an impact on your hormones, too.^[14]
 1. Having a low body weight can contribute to irregularities in your menstrual cycle, making it harder to predict when you will ovulate.^[15]
2. **Prevent and treat STIs to protect your fertility.** Certain sexually transmitted infections, like chlamydia and gonorrhea, can cause female infertility. If you suspect you have an STI, visit your doctor to get tested as soon as possible. For bacterial STIs, like chlamydia, your doctor can prescribe an antibiotic to get it cleared up.^[16]
 1. Using condoms is a great way to reduce your chance of getting an STI. Of course, if you're trying to get pregnant this may not be an option for you, but you should still use caution and avoid sexual interaction if you or your partner has symptoms or knowledge of an STI.^[17]
3. **Get 7-9 hours of sleep each night to support your reproductive health.** Quality of sleep may have a big impact on your fertility, so it's really important that you make sleep a priority when you're trying to conceive. If you have recurrent insomnia or issues with staying asleep, talk to your doctor.^[18]
 1. Try going to bed and getting up at the same time each day to help your body get into a good sleeping rhythm.^[19]
4. **Have sex often to increase your chances of getting pregnant.** Of course, having sex near your ovulation date is key to conceiving, but you may also benefit from regularly having sex even when you're not ovulating. Try having sex every day, every other day, or at least 2-3 times a week after your cycle ends.^[20]
 1. The more often you have sex, the better the chances that your egg will get fertilized.
5. **Avoid taking herbs and supplements said to increase fertility.** While you may be interested in doing anything you can to help promote healthy eggs and a greater chance of getting pregnant, you should always use herbs and supplements with caution. If you're interested in taking something, talk to your doctor first and get their advice.^[21]
 1. Many herbs and supplements that are said to increase fertility, both in men and in women, haven't been approved by the FDA and may have adverse effects.

Seeking Medical Attention

1. **See your doctor regularly for check-ups to detect any issues early on.** Even if you're not ready to try and get pregnant yet, you can still be proactive by getting regular exams. Depending on your age, health, and sexual history, your doctor may want to see you annually for an exam, or every 2 years.^[22]
 1. Talk to your doctor about fertility and ask them if there are any additional steps you should be taking to keep your eggs healthy and have the best chances of getting pregnant.
2. **Talk to your doctor if you've been trying to get pregnant for a year or more.** For some women it just takes a while to get pregnant, so even if you've been trying for a while, that doesn't necessarily mean you're infertile—talking with your doctor can help ease your anxiety and determine if there are any other steps you should be taking.^[23]
 1. If you're over 35, talk to your doctor after 6 months of trying to conceive.
 2. Trying to get pregnant can be stressful and hard, especially if you've been trying for a long time. You and your partner should both meet with a doctor to determine if there is something that can be done on either side to increase your fertility.
3. **Have your doctor test you for PCOS or other thyroid issues.** Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) can cause your body to stop ovulating or ovulate infrequently, which can make it extremely hard to get pregnant. Similarly, other thyroid issues can affect your hormones, making it harder to conceive or stay pregnant.^[24]
 1. Your doctor will generally run some labs to check out your hormone levels and may do a physical exam, too.^[25]
 2. PCOS is typically treated through lifestyle changes and hormone therapy. There are also some medications that your doctor might prescribe to help you ovulate so you can continue trying to get pregnant.^[26]
4. **Consider having your eggs tested if you're having trouble getting pregnant.** Testing can tell you a lot about how many eggs you have and what condition they're in. As you get older, you do start to have fewer and fewer eggs, and testing can tell you if your egg supply is something you should be concerned about.^[27]
 1. It can take a long time to get pregnant, even if your eggs are in great shape!
5. **Have fertility treatments if needed to help your body produce more eggs.** Your doctor may prescribe a medication that can help your body produce extra eggs to increase your chances of getting pregnant, or you may be able to take something that causes ovulation so you know exactly when is the best time to try and get pregnant. There are also other reproductive options, like IVF or IUI, that are really common and often help women conceive.^[28]
 1. IVF stands for in vitro fertilization. Your doctor will extract eggs from you and fertilize them outside of your body. Once they're fertilized, they'll be transferred back into your uterus.^[29]
 2. IUI stands for intrauterine insemination. This is where your doctor will place sperm directly into your uterus when you ovulate for the highest chances of egg fertilization.

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