

CHECKLIST FOR MEN: PROTECTING FERTILITY AND PREPARING FOR CONCEPTION

Sperm cells need 70–90 days to mature. A man's habits over the last 3 months have a real impact on sperm quality, fertility, and the health of the future baby.

1. Protection against testicular overheating

- I avoid hot baths, jacuzzis and saunas (they increase testicular temperature and reduce sperm quality).
- I do not keep my laptop on my lap.
- I wear loose, breathable underwear made from natural fabrics (e.g. cotton, bamboo).
- I avoid very tight trousers, including tight cycling shorts.
- I avoid heated underwear.
- I limit long periods of sitting without a break (I stand up and stretch at least every 30–60 minutes).
- I take breaks when working in hot environments (e.g. kitchen, factory floor).
- In hot weather, I use air conditioning (heat disrupts sperm production, in summer and autumn the sperm quality may be low, sperm cells may be abnormal).
- I do not use heated car seats or electric blankets in the area of the testes.

2. Protection against air pollution and toxins

- I check air quality (e.g. AQI / Airly apps) and limit outdoor activity on days with high air pollution.
- I use air purifiers in cities and areas where the air quality is poor (including in the bedroom).
- I avoid contact with pesticides, solvents, paints (I use gloves, other protective equipment and proper ventilation).

- I choose organic products where possible and wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly.
- I do not heat food in plastic containers, especially those containing BPA.
- I avoid catering services that deliver hot meals in plastic or foam containers.
- I do not wrap food in plastic film/foil or aluminium foil coated with plastic.
- I minimise contact with parabens and phthalates (e.g. some cosmetics, deodorants, films/foils, softened plastics such as some yoghurt cups).

3. Avoiding substances that harm fertility

- I do not smoke (if you smoke: quit – nicotine, tars and heavy metals damage sperm DNA).
- I avoid passive smoking (always – at work, at home and e.g. in pubs).
- I do not use marijuana (it reduces sperm count and motility and in some people has harmful effects on health).
- I stop drinking alcohol (frequent drinking lowers testosterone levels and reduces sperm quality).
- I avoid anabolic steroids (they can lead to temporary or permanent infertility and have harmful effects on health).

4. Antioxidant support and diet

- I eat vegetables, fruit, nuts, seeds and healthy plant fats (e.g. olive oil) every day.
- I enrich my diet with products containing zinc (e.g. pumpkin seeds, eggs, meat), selenium (e.g. Brazil nuts) and coenzyme Q10 (e.g. fish, broccoli).
- If recommended by a doctor, I take dietary supplements dedicated to men planning to conceive or, for example, vitamin C, E, D3 as well as zinc, selenium, omega-3 fatty acids and coenzyme Q10 (only after consulting a doctor).

- I take care of hydration – at least 2 litres of water per day.
- I limit sugar, trans fats and highly processed foods.

5. Healthy lifestyle

- I keep a healthy body weight, BMI 18.5–24.9 (obesity worsens semen parameters).
- I exercise regularly but avoid overtraining. I aim for at least 150 minutes per week of moderate physical activity (this improves sperm quality, but regular excessive intense training can lower sperm count).
- I get enough sleep – at least 7 hours every night, ideally in a dark, well-ventilated room.
- I reduce stress (stress lowers testosterone levels and reduces sperm quality).
- I avoid shift work and night work (it disrupts hormonal rhythms).
- I limit evening exposure to blue light: I switch off screens 1–2 hours before bedtime and use solutions that reduce blue light (blue light affects melatonin synthesis, which can damage sperm cells; poor sleep also disrupts testosterone production).

6. Before planning a pregnancy I complete recommended tests and consult the appropriate specialists (all tests should be carried out in agreement with your doctor, who will assess whether they are necessary):

- Visit to a GP or andrologist.
- Basic blood tests: e.g. complete blood count, TSH, glucose, lipid profile – when ordered by a doctor.
- Semen analysis (seminogram) if trying for 12+ months – when ordered by a doctor.
- Dental check-up (inflammation in the mouth can affect the whole body: as a result, sperm maturation is poorer and DNA damage occurs, which reduces the chances of fertilisation and increases the risk of miscarriage).

- Optional: checking immunity to infectious diseases (e.g. hepatitis B, rubella, tetanus, chickenpox – to protect your partner and baby).
- Other additional tests recommended after consulting a doctor.



Do you know how many subtle, often overlooked factors can undermine fertility? Many couples don't — and the consequences frequently mean lost time, unnecessary costs, and emotional strain. You deserve clarity. You deserve preparation. And you deserve to protect what truly matters.

Don't let misinformation, environmental exposures or preventable missteps stand between you and the family you hope to build. Your health, your resources, and your future parenthood are worth safeguarding.

“In vitro – facts, risks, pitfalls” is a rigorous, evidence-based guide designed to support you through every stage of the IVF journey.

Clear, practical and empowering, it helps you recognise common pitfalls, prepare your body responsibly, ask the right questions — and meaningfully increase your chances of success.

