Whether you’re just starting out or have been trying for a while...

A~Z Fertility Guide

PLUS 8 PAGES OF NATURAL FERTILITY-BOOSTING RECIPES
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Inspired by our own personal experiences, we at Bud have created this simple and informative guide to offer tips, information and encouragement, to all those in their pursuit of parenthood.
**ALCOHOL**

This is the last thing you want to hear, but if you’re trying to conceive you need to cut out the hard stuff. Both of you. There’s strong scientific evidence it can affect your fertility. Yes, we all know that person who got up the duff after a wild night on the sauce, but it’s not the norm.

For women, just one to five units a week can reduce the chances of conception. Men are advised no more than 14 units a week, spread over at least three days. It’s not just about avoiding brewer’s droop: booze can lower testosterone, sex drive and the quality and amount of sperm you produce.

**BALLS**

Give those swimmers a sporting chance! Balls function at their fertile best at a cool 34°F. Back when we were cavemen this was fine: running wild and hanging free in not much more than a loin cloth. These days, sperm are sweating it out in skinny jeans, hot baths and tighty whities.

**TRY AND AVOID**

- riding bicycles and motorbikes
- using laptops on laps
- putting mobiles in pockets.

**COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

If you’re having trouble conceiving, you’re not alone. One in seven UK couples experience problems: that’s approximately 3.5 million people right now. It’s crucial to be surrounded by a supportive community. Knowing you’re not alone can help. Hearing others’ stories – and sharing yours if you wish – can be therapeutic. You’ll discover every emotion you’re feeling is not just normal it’s totally acceptable, and there’s absolutely no need to feel guilty, embarrassed or ashamed.

littlebud.com/forum is a good place to start.

**VITAMIN D**

During the winter months, many of us are vitamin D-deficient. Our bodies create it using sunlight and it’s fundamental for fertility and pregnancy. It affects your sex hormones - if you don’t have enough it’ll reduce your sex drive - and it’s been linked to ovulation disorders and PCOS (polycystic ovary syndrome). Although you can get some vitamin D from food (egg yolk, fortified foods, oily fish, red meat) the best way is through a supplement. The Department of Health recommends everyone over 5 years old takes 10mcg a day from October-March/April.

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3 It takes up to three months for sperm to mature, so it’s time to swap briefs for boxers, say no to the sauna and walk to work (in baggy jeans) instead.
E JACULATION
This is a pretty important part of getting pregnant. Whether you’re doing it the natural way through IUI or IVF, you’ll probably need to shoot your load at some point.

Healthy ejaculation distances range from a gentle spurt to a metre or more. The average is 17-25cm. In terms of volume, it tends to be around a teaspoonful (3-5ml) but can range from 1-15ml. However, none of this has any bearing on fertility. The vagina’s designed to help sperm complete their journey, and doesn’t discriminate against size or speed.

Having a few issues in this department? Don’t worry - ejaculation problems are common, just book an appointment to see your GP.

» Around one in ten men will experience premature ejaculation. Stress, depression, anxiety and high blood pressure can affect erections. And delayed ejaculation can be caused by anything from antidepressants to getting older.

F FOLIC ACID
Folic acid is a synthetic B vitamin that’s vital in pregnancy: it prevents your baby from developing a variety of neural tube defects such as spina bifida and anencephaly. The Department of Health recommends every woman who’s pregnant or trying for a baby take a daily supplement of 400mcg.

FOLIC ACID

Folate, folic acid’s natural form, can be found in certain foods, including whole grains, leafy greens (spinach, collard greens, kale), oranges, meat and pulses. However, it can be in very small quantities, so it’s almost impossible to eat enough to protect your baby: supplementation is advised.

GETTING JIGGY
It’s time to enjoy some horizontal dancing - and lots of it.

Ladies, knowing your cycle is vital. You’ll need to pinpoint your fertile window and aim to have sex every day or two during this time. If that’s too pressurised or brings on stage fright, simply do it three times a week, every week, and have fun.

It doesn’t matter what position you’re in and although the vagina’s naturally designed to move semen northwards, it can’t hurt to lie on your back with a pillow under your hips for 15 minutes afterwards. There’s absolutely no need for headstands though.

» Bedroom fun releases oxytocin (the love hormone) making you and your partner feel closer and more connected, it’s a de-stressor, immune-booster, pain reliever and - if you really go for it - great aerobic exercise (and way more fun than the gym).

H HORMONES
These chemical messengers are secreted by glands then travel round the body telling cells what to do. They’re responsible for everything from hunger to emotions. And – if they’re out of whack – can have a huge effect on fertility. Here are the key ones to know and their roles in conception.

MALE
Testosterone: gives us our male sexual characteristics and is a key player in arousal, libido, erection and sperm production.

Oestrogen: not just a lady-hormone - men need some too. It helps regulate many factors including testosterone, libido, sexual function, sperm count and seminal fluid.

Progesterone: regulates oestrogen levels and helps sperm to penetrate the egg by ‘hyperactivating’ their tails.

Luteinising Hormone (LH): tells your testes to produce testosterone.

Follicle Stimulating Hormone (FSH): stimulates sperm production. FSH tests can help discover possible causes of infertility.

DHEA (dehydroepiandrosterone): helps produce oestrogen and testosterone and declines with age.

FEMALE
Oestrogen: gives us our female sexual characteristics and regulates the menstrual cycle.

Progesterone: also regulates the menstrual cycle and is responsible for lutein and fallopian tube function. It’s a key hormone in supporting a developing embryo and determines our susceptibility to diabetes and insulin resistant PCOS (polycystic ovary syndrome).

Luteinising Hormone (LH): responsible for ovulation – releasing the egg from the ovary. This is the hormone monitored by ovulation prediction kits.

Policic Stimulating Hormone (FSH): stimulates the ovarian follicles to produce eggs. Testing it can help diagnose fertility problems, menopause, PCOS (polycystic ovary syndrome) and ovarian cysts.

Anti-Mullerian (AMH): produced in your ovarian follicles. Some clinics test it to find out your ovarian reserve (how many eggs you have left).

Cortisol: the stress hormone. Too much may cause miscarriage or infertility.

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LADY BITS

The female reproductive system is an incredibly delicate, clever, complicated beast: from fallopian tubes to ovaries, eggs, uterus, breasts, vulvas and vaginas. And to conceive it needs to be in good working order. If you’ve any concerns, it’s worth going to see your GP. Spotting, very heavy periods or pain in the reproductive area are some things to watch out for. Half of women having trouble conceiving have reproductive issues, which can range from endometriosis to PCOS (polycystic ovary syndrome) and fibroids.

Tracking your monthly cycle is important: you’ll learn what’s normal for you, can spot patterns and irregularities, and share this data with your doctor. There are plenty of cycle tracking apps online, just don’t rely on them to tell you when you’re ovulating – you’re better off getting a specific test to monitor your LH levels – as everyone’s cycle is different.

MOVE IT

Being physically fit puts your body in the best possible shape for conception. It lowers stress, blood pressure, can reduce the risk of ovulation disorders in women and build up testosterone in men.

For women, moderate, low-intensity exercise is the goal: five 30-minute sessions a week. However, if you’re continually smashing PBs or topping the CrossFit leader board and having trouble conceiving, ease off. Extreme exercising can lower fertility by disrupting your hormonal balance, your ovulation cycle, and letting your body fat fall too low.

NUTRITION

Nutrition is crucial when it comes to conception: food affects everything from your cells to your blood sugar and hormones. Go for a ‘rainbow’ of fruit and veg. Pump up your protein and calcium with eggs, full-fat dairy, meat, nuts, beans or tofu. Boost your blood with iron, from red meat if possible. Choose unprocessed wholegrains for your carbs. And get friendly with your local fishmonger. Ladies, have a couple of low-mercury, oily fish dishes a week: omega 3 fatty acids may help regulate your cycle and improve egg quality. Guys, it’s time to get shucking: oysters are full of zinc which boosts testosterone and improves sperm quality. Added bonus – they’re an aphrodisiac.

LITTLEBUD.COM’S FERTILITY GUIDE 2017
EAT WELL

Fertility Boosting Recipes: Enjoy these wholesome, nutrient packed & simple recipes, designed to fuel your body & feed it with all the vitamins & nutrients it needs to help support your natural fertility.

littlebud.com/health-nutrition

STICKY SWEET SEMI-DRIED TOMATOES

VEGETARIAN / VEGAN / GLUTEN FREE / DAIRY FREE

500g of cherry tomatoes
2 Tbsp olive oil
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1/4 tsp salt
freshly ground black pepper

SERVES 6

Per serving: Calories: 38, Carbs: 3g, Fat: 3g, Protein: 1g, Sugar: 3g

DIRECTIONS
1. Preheat oven to 120°C. In a bowl mix the oil and crushed garlic. Slice the cherry tomatoes in half, add to the bowl and coat the halved tomatoes in the olive oil mixture. Spread evenly on a baking tray lined with greaseproof paper and season with the salt and pepper.
2. Cook them low and slow for 2 hours, until the edges begin to dry out slightly but the centre is soft and caramelised.
3. Once cooled store them in a jar or airtight container and cover with olive oil. These can be stored in the fridge for up to a week. Use in salads and pastas or add to sandwiches to liven up a midweek lunch and include an intense lycopene hit.

SERVING SUGGESTION
These are delicious served hot out of the oven on top of toasted bread with a dollop of pesto and goats’ cheese.

WHY TOMATOES?
Ruby red tomatoes are rich in lycopene, shown to help healthy sperm motility & morphology. Use fresh red tomatoes for the maximum lycopene hit and store them out of the fridge to avoid depleting the vitamin content. You can also find good sources of lycopene in other fruit and veg such as carrots, apricots, watermelon and papaya.

For more fertility-boosting recipes go to littlebud.com/health-nutrition
CHICKEN & ASPARAGUS BAKE

GLUTEN FREE / DAIRY FREE
4 chicken breasts or thighs
bunch of fresh, trimmed asparagus
1kg cherry tomatoes
2 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped
2 Tbsp olive oil
1 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
Juice of 1/2 lemon
2 sprigs of rosemary
1 tsp oregano
salt & pepper

SERVES 4
Per serving: Calories: 346, Carbs: 12g, Fat: 13g, Protein: 42g, Sugar: 9g

DIRECTIONS
1. Preheat oven to 220˚C
2. Add the asparagus, tomatoes, garlic, olive oil, herbs and a large pinch of salt and pepper to a large oven proof dish. Mix well ensuring everything is well coated.
3. Lay the chicken breasts on top of vegetables, season well and squeeze over lemon juice.
4. Bake for 20 minutes until the chicken is golden brown and cooked through.
5. Serve with the juices from the pan with salad or new potatoes.

FRITTATA

VEGETARIAN / GLUTEN FREE
6 eggs
3 spring onions
1 clove garlic
1 Tbsp olive oil
100g goats’ cheese
350g cherry tomatoes
2 sprigs fresh thyme

SERVES 4
Per serving: Calories: 182, Carbs: 6g, Fat: 13g, Protein: 11g, Sugar: 3g

DIRECTIONS
1. Mix the eggs and season well.
2. Heat the oil in an oven proof frying pan and add the garlic, spring onions and tomatoes until softened and sprinkle over the thyme leaves.
3. Pour the egg mixture over the ingredients in the pan and cook for 2 minutes.
4. Move the pan to a preheated grill for 5-7 minutes until golden and cooked through.

TOP TIP
You can bulk up your frittata with all sorts of fantastic fertility boosting ingredients depending on what’s in season or hanging about in your fridge! Try asparagus, peas, potatoes, onions, rocket or courgettes. And you can swap out the goats’ cheese for 40g cheddar or similar.

WHY ASPARAGUS?
Asparagus is a top tip for boosting fertility – not just for its famous aphrodisiac qualities but also because asparagus is full of folate. Folic acid can help reduce ovulation problems and is essential to take before and during pregnancy as it contributes to maternal tissue growth and helps to prevent neural tube defects.

WHY EGGS?
Eggs are a great source of vitamin D and vitamin B12 – both very important for female fertility.
1 large butternut squash
2 cloves garlic, sliced finely
2 small red chillies or 1 tsp dried chilli flakes
1/2 tsp turmeric
1/2 tsp cumin seeds
sea salt
freshly ground black pepper
2 Tbsp olive oil

SERVES 4

Per Serving: Calories: 135, Carbs: 18g, Fat: 7g, Protein: 0g, Sugar: 4g

DIRECTIONS

1. Slice the squash in half length-wise, scoop out the seeds with a spoon and slice the halves into 1/4-inch thick half circles.

2. Place the sliced squash in a large bowl and add the olive oil, chopped chilli (or chilli flakes), turmeric, garlic, cumin seeds, salt & pepper. Toss the squash in the oil and spices making sure to coat each piece well.

3. Spread the squash on a baking tray and roast for 30 minutes until golden brown, soft and starting to caramelise.

This can be enjoyed as a side dish or simply served with a crumble of feta, a few spinach leaves and a dollop of cooling yoghurt as a main meal. Or why not try using the roasted squash in one of these three delicious recipes...

KALE & SQUASH WINTER SALAD
Whisk together a dressing of 1 Tbsp olive oil, juice of 1 lemon, 1 Tbsp dijon mustard & 1 Tbsp maple syrup. Use this to dress a large bunch of chopped kale & mix through the roasted squash & the seeds of one pomegranate. Finish by sprinkling with crumbled goats’ cheese & a handful of toasted almonds.

Calories: 285, Carbs: 45g, Fat: 12g, Protein: 7g, Sugar: 10g

SPICY SQUASH SOUP
Fry an onion in 1 Tbsp coconut oil. To this, add the cooked squash, 1/2 can coconut milk (200ml) & 700ml vegetable stock. Simmer for 20 minutes. Add some extra chilli flakes and a pinch of cayenne if you like it hot! Transfer to a blender or food processor and blitz until smooth.

Enjoy this delicious, warming soup with a swirl of coconut cream & a sprinkle of chilli flakes.

Calories: 242, Carbs: 22g, Fat: 16g, Protein: 1g, Sugar: 6g

MOROCCAN COUSCOUS WITH SPICED ROAST SQUASH
Put 1 cup of couscous & a handful of raisins in a bowl. Pour over 350ml vegetable stock, cover the bowl with cling film & steam for 5 minutes.

Fluff up the couscous & mix through the roasted squash, some sliced dried apricots, zest of 1/2 lemon, a handful of toasted pine nuts & finish with some chopped mint.

Calories: 453, Carbs: 78g, Fat: 13g, Protein: 11g, Sugar: 12g

For more fertility-boosting recipes go to littlebud.com/health-nutrition

WHY BUTTERNUT SQUASH?

There are many amber hued sources of fertility goodness your diet can benefit from, but butternut squash has stand out nutritional qualities when it comes to fuelling your body – ready for conception. It is rich in beta-Carotene which is known to help boost production of the hormone progesterone and increase sperm quality and count.
FERTILITY SMOOTHIES

DIRECTIONS FOR ALL

1. Peel & slice everything into chunks
2. Add to a blender & blitz until smooth
3. Add ice cubes to the blender until you achieve the right consistency – you don’t want it too chunky or sludgy! Serve immediately over ice.

**ZINGY BEETROOT SMOOTHIE**

1 medium beet, trimmed & scrubbed
1 Granny Smith apple, peeled and cored
2 medium carrots, peeled
1cm knob of ginger, peeled & sliced
1/2 tsp vanilla extract
Juice of 1/2 lemon

Calories: 193, Carbs: 46g, Fat: 0g, Protein: 3g, Sugar: 31g

**SWEET GREEN SMOOTHIE**

2 large handfuls of baby spinach
1/2 banana (fresh or frozen)
1 kiwi and a squeeze of lime
Optional extra – you can add half an avocado for a great source of healthy fats to make a rich, creamy shake - loosen up with a splash of coconut water/milk, if required

Calories: 128, Carbs: 31g, Fat: 0g, Protein: 4g, Sugar: 16g

**CITRUS SUNSHINE SMOOTHIE**

Juice of one orange
1/2 banana (fresh or frozen)
140g pineapple (fresh or frozen)
1 medium carrot
squeeze of fresh lemon juice
1/4 tsp ground turmeric
1cm knob of ginger, peeled and sliced

Calories: 210, Carbs: 43g, Fat: 1g, Protein: 8g, Sugar: 27g

A scoop of quality whey or vegan protein powder
1-2 tbs of nut butter - peanut, almond, cashew
3 tbs of oats
1-3 tbs of chia seeds.
Swap water for 200ml of dairy or nut milks.

Amino acids provided by protein are the building blocks for cells in the body. Add in a protein punch by including some of the following in your smoothie...

ADDED POWER WITH PROTEIN
OVULATION
You can only get pregnant at time of ovulation, so aim to have sex every other day during your fertile window - the five days before ovulation and ovulation day itself. Sex during the rest of the month is great practice, keeps sperm fresh and couples connected, but it won’t make a baby.

Ovulation’s often said to be 12-14 days before your period, or day 14 in a 28-day menstrual cycle. But for most women this isn’t true. Your cycle could range from 21-45 days and you could ovulate on a different day every month.

The most accurate way to pinpoint your fertile window is with an ovulation predictor kit. They test your hormone levels – but aren’t always 100% accurate.

Natural signs you’re ovulating might include a change in cervical mucus (stretchy, clear, egg white consistency), mild pain on one side of the lower abdomen, heightened sense of smell and increased libido. You can also track your basal body temperature (BBT) throughout the month: it rises – marginally – for a day or two after ovulation.

PATIENCE & POSITIVITY
Although we’d all love to conceive on the first go, it’s not usually that simple or stress-free. The good news is 84% of couples will do so within a year of having regular, unprotected sex (three times a week, every week). However, as women get older – and potentially men as well – fertility decreases, and it might take a while longer.

Give yourselves the best chance by living healthily and enjoying regular nookie, and if you’ve no joy after a year or two make a visit to see your GP. They’ll check for any underlying reasons or refer you to a fertility clinic.

QUESTIONS?
Before you go rooting through the depths of Doctor Google, it might be wise to see your GP. They’re the best primary source of information for any would-be parents. Everyone’s different – some of us conceive immediately, some take years – and until you start trying you won’t know which camp you belong to. They’ll be able to advise on lifestyle changes or refer you to clinics as necessary. Knowledge is power, and you’ll be in a better position to move forward.
RELAXATION
Several studies have shown stress affects fertility. This might be down to an increase in the hormones cortisol or epinephrine in women, the way stress affects the lining of the uterus and subsequent implantation of the egg, or the negative effect it can have on sperm production and erectile function.

The concept of creating a mini human is equal parts exciting and terrifying. As such, trying to conceive can be stressful, and (ironically) detrimental to your sex life. That’s why it’s important to take time out and relax. Stop making it all about babies, and start enjoying the now. So take up yoga, meditate, do reflexology, have a massage, go on holiday or try acupuncture.

SUPERFOODS
There’s good nutrition - and then there’s super nutrition. Superfoods are starting to be recognised for their positive effect on fertility.

MACA ROOT When it comes to female fertility, it balances hormones, improves regularity of menstrual cycles, can enhance ovulation and support sexual function. Men benefit from better sperm quality, count and motility, as well as improved sexual function. A spot of trivia: this Peruvian miracle is one of the porn industry’s best kept secrets - boosting male and female libido and allegedly accounting for some pretty spectacular ejaculations.

MUIRA PUAMA Hailing from Brazil, this plant’s been used for centuries to deal with problems including rheumatism, influenza and gastrointestinal upsets. But it’s really known as an aphrodisiac - and is commonly called “potency wood”. It stimulates libido and boosts physical performance in both sexes, helps support healthy erections in men and a more intense orgasm in women. Winner. Just don’t forget to check with your doctor before taking any supplements, especially if you’re already pregnant.

TMI Too Much Information can send you round the bend. Who do you listen to and who do you ignore? (Yes, we appreciate the irony.) For your sanity, it’s important to set boundaries.

UNIQUE Everybody’s journey to parenthood is unique. Don’t have any hard and fast expectations. Don’t make any assumptions. Even if all your immediate family have had identical experiences, it doesn’t mean you will too. Listen to your body, talk to your partner and decide what your path is once you’re on it.

VITAMINS
Men and women can both maximise their chances for conception by making sure they’re getting the right combination of vitamins.

For women, folic acid and vitamin D are recommended by NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence). Also, make sure you avoid an excess of vitamin A in foods or supplements, as it can cause problems in the developing foetus - high doses are found in liver and liver products such as pâté.

For men, zinc is essential (100-200mg, daily). It’s reported to increase sperm count and motility as well as testosterone levels. Selenium contributes to normal spermatogenesis and L-carnitine improves sperm quality. Vitamin C is said to stop sperm sticking together, giving them more chance of reaching that egg.

WAISTLINE
Obesity can affect male and female fertility. In women, hormones can be affected, making conception less likely and insulin resistance more likely. Obese men can experience a drop in testosterone levels and are more prone to erectile dysfunction. If your BMI is over 30, a healthy diet and lifestyle changes can go a long way to increasing your chances of conception.
Kiss your partner. Frequently. Surprise them with date nights. Surprise them in the sack! Tell them you love them. Just make sure you keep the romance alive. It’s easy to find you’ve lost the spark because it’s all become about baby-making. Yes, it can be stressful. But you’re doing this together and it’s far easier if you have fun while you’re at it.

YOU

Remember: you and your partner are the most important parts of this story. Your journey to conception is only just beginning and it’s easy to become overwhelmed with advice, judgements, hopes and fears. Which is why it’s so important to look after yourself. Resolving to stay emotionally, physically, spiritually and mentally balanced will put you in the best shape for whatever lies ahead.

Z

Your bed isn’t just for baby-making antics, it’s also for sleep. And without a trip to the land of nod you’re not going to be in the best shape to procreate.

Guys: if you have interrupted REM cycles — when you dream — it could affect your testosterone production. This means lower libido, poor concentration, fatigue and weakness. You should aim for a solid eight hours a night.

Girls: while you’re getting some shut eye, your prolactin and leptin supplies are being replenished, helping regulate periods and ovulation. Fertility mainstays oestrogen, progesterone, LH and FSH are also being produced and secreted. You should aim for seven to nine hours a night.

For more information, help and support visit littlebud.com

The information provided above is for informational purposes only and should not be construed as medical advice or a substitute for medical care.
MALE FORMULA

Peruvian MACA studies have shown that Maca helps support sexual function and improve sperm quality, count & motility. Zinc which contributes to normal fertility and reproduction & the maintenance of normal testosterone levels in the blood Selenium & L-carnitine - contribute to normal spermatogenesis and improves sperm quality. Also includes, Cordyceps, Pygeum and Ashwaganda to support sexual health and natural fertility.

FEMALE FORMULA

Peruvian MACA is a powerful adaptogen, it works to balance female hormones, improve regularity of cycles, enhance ovulation and support sexual function. It also provides a concentrated source of vitamins and minerals to help properly nourish your body in preparation for pregnancy.

✓ Contains 400mcg of folic acid (folate), as recommended for women by the UK Dept for Health.

Also includes, Muira Puama, Cordyceps & Sea Kelp to support sexual health and natural fertility.

Bud’s innovative formulas contain adaptogens, minerals and essential vitamins, proven to support vital aspects of reproductive health and function.

“Supplementation can be useful for fertility in a couple of different ways. Firstly, if people aren’t getting a balanced nutrient intake through their regular diet - and secondly there are some aspects of physiology which we’d like to improve or enhance in the preconception period when people are trying to conceive. In terms of ovulation, sperm production and libido, supplementation can help all these aspects”.

Dr. Adam Cunliffe PhD (RNutr)
Let’s talk about Fertility.

TRYING TO CONCEIVE
FERTILITY TREATMENT
FERTILITY HEALTH & NUTRITION
FERTILITY SUPPORT
MEN’S FORUM

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A NEW STANDARD IN FERTILITY SUPPLEMENTS

⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐

100% NATURAL

✓ Developed by clinical nutritionists
✓ Formulated to reduce stress and promote well-being
✓ Targets male and female hormonal balance
✓ Contains 400mcg of folic acid, as recommended for women by the UK Dept for Health

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