Diet is a critical key to successful conception… for both partners. I’ve seen over and over again that a good diet and lifestyle is critical for at least six months before trying to conceive for both partners. Nature tries in every way possible to ensure the survival of a new life, but the poor nutrition and stress of today’s culture seems to be at the root of most fertility problems.

Guidelines for Male Fertility:

A “virility nutrition” program for men includes a short cleansing diet (see pg. 60-61 of this book for my 24-hour cleanse, it’s a great cleanse for men to follow, too!). Then, focus on zinc-rich foods like pumpkin seeds, shellfish and seafood, protein rich foods, minimal sweets and dairy foods, and plenty of whole grains. Organic foods are important. A study in Lancet shows men who eat organic foods produce 43% more sperm than those who don’t!

Healthy fats form a critical part of sperm cell membranes. Eating more foods rich in essential fatty acids like fish, flax seed, and borage seed can improve sperm quality and function. Unless you’re very overweight, a weight loss diet may not be a good idea during preconception. Severe food limitation has a direct impact on the testicles. A study coming from Massachusetts General Hospital shows that men’s testosterone levels fall by 1/3 after fasting for 6-7 days. A man’s fertility rise may take place in as
little as 2 months after his diet improves. Do not smoke; avoid secondary smoke. Avoid areas with smog and pollutants.

**Step-by-Step Fertility Diet for Men**

You can follow a diet like this for 1–6 months. Add variety by including your choice of fresh, seasonal organic produce whenever possible. Choose free range meats and seafood from uncontaminated waters as much as possible. Note: Pesticide residues on commercially grown foods can disrupt male fertility by lowering sperm count. Buy organic!

**On rising:** Have a protein drink like METABOLIC RESPONSE MODIFIERS WHEY PUMPED or PURE FORM WHEY PROTEIN drink. Add 1–2 tsp. of HERBS AMERICA MACA MAGIC powder for extra fertility help.

**Breakfast:** Have whole grain cereal with apple or cranberry juice, or whole grain muffins with yogurt and fresh fruit, especially apples; or have poached or soft boiled eggs, and whole grain toast or couscous. Have a glass of fresh squeezed orange, tangerine or pomegranate juice for antioxidants.

**Midmorning:** Make a mix of nutritional yeast, bee pollen granules, wheat germ and oat bran: blend 2 tsp. into a superfood drink like GREEN FOODS GREEN MAGMA, WAKUNAGA KYO GREEN or ALOE LIFE DAILY GREENS. Or, have some low fat cottage cheese with nuts and seeds and whole grain crackers.

**Lunch:** Have a green leafy salad with a lemon oil or Italian dressing. Include celery, avocados and some grilled fresh fish like wild salmon if available. Or, have a hearty but low fat black beans and rice meal; or a roast turkey and spinach sandwich with a cup of lentil soup. Now is a good time to take your fertility enhancing supplements.

**Mid-Afternoon:** Have a cup of ginseng or licorice root tea (avoid licorice if you have high blood pressure) and a handful of pumpkin seeds for zinc.

**Dinner:** Have an Italian meal with whole grain or vegetable pasta, a light shellfish sauce and a green salad. Or, have a seafood and shellfish stew with steamed vegetables. Or have baked chicken or salmon with brown rice and peas.

**Before bed:** Have a nutritional yeast broth or small bottle of mineral water.

The male system responds quickly to nutritional changes. In addition, supplementation can produce dramatic renewed fertility results for men. Consider the following supplements for a man’s fertility and virility program.
Supplement Choices for Men’s Fertility

Choose 2 or 3 supplement recommendations. For detailed information on how herbs work for fertility, see pg. 42-47 of this book.

- **Natural vitamin E**, 400IU daily. New studies show vitamin E fights free radical damage and significantly improves sperm motility and fertility in men. A selenium supplement can improve sperm function. Try Vitamin E 400IU with selenium 200mcg daily (tests show pregnancies rise 21%).
- **Folic acid**, 800mcg daily (a key fertility nutrient for men, too) with **Zinc** 50–75mg daily or **Ethical Nutrients Zinc Status** (tests for deficiency, too). A 2002 study published in *Fertility and Sterility* showed men who took folic acid and zinc together had a 74% increase in total sperm count.
- **B12** helps about half of men with low sperm count.
- Tests show the amino acid **L-carnitine**, 500–3000mg daily, boosts sperm quality in subfertile men.
- **L-arginine**, 2000–4000mg can raise sperm count and motility (contraindicated if you have herpes).
- **Pycnogenol** shows good results for sperm quality. In a clinical test with subfertile men, 200mg daily of pycnogenol improved sperm quality and motility by 38%.
- **Vitamin C**, 3000mg daily and **niacin** 500mg (good results for low sperm count or sperm clumping).

Men’s fertility nutrient boosters:

**Solaray Male Caps with orchic extract**, or **Country Life Max For Men with raw orchic glandular**. Try the carotene Lycopene (excellent results); CoQ10 60mg to enhance sperm energy production, as well as sperm count and motility.

Effective ginseng boosters: **Crystal Star Male Performance™ caps** or ginseng/damiana, 4 caps daily. To boost sperm quality and amount, try Siberian eleuthero extract (increases almost 30%); or **Lane Labs Fertile Male** (clinically shown to promote sperm count and mobility, good fertility results for our tester).

To remove heavy metals, especially lead from pesticides, consider **Crystal Star Toxin Detox™ caps**, 6 daily. Add extra glutathione for antioxidant defense. I like **Carlson Glutathione Booster**.
Guidelines for Female Fertility

A “fertility nutrition” program for a woman includes plenty of salads and greens, very low sugars, and a smaller volume of whole grains and nuts. Her diet should be low in saturated fats and trans fatty acids, moderate in Omega 6’s from vegetable oils, but rich in essential fatty acids from sea greens and Omega-3 oils. We recommend fish and seafoods during pre-conception and after conception, rather than meat, (unless certified organic, because much of America’s meat and poultry is antibiotic or hormone laced). A British study reveals women who eat more Omega 3 fatty acid rich fish during their last trimester give birth to bigger babies, who are less prone to problems like high blood pressure later in life. Newer research shows supplementing with omega 3 fatty acids may help prevent preeclampsia, postpartum depression, and a score of other problems like osteoporosis and breast cancer. Health from the Sun and Barleans Organic Oil both make high quality Omega 3 fatty acid supplements that we’ve used with good results.

Limit dairy foods before conception. Too much dairy clogs the female system. Avoid refined carbs and sugar that feed candida yeast and imbalance androgen production. Imbalanced testosterone levels can lead to problems with embryonic development. Yeast infections and UTI’s create an over-acidic environment which is inhospitable to sperm. Women with highly acidic vaginal pH may have difficulty becoming pregnant. (Esteemed colleague, Wayne Diamond, N.D. has used dandelion root tea in these cases with good results.) Excess sugar and alcohol can also interfere with estrogen metabolism. Cruciferous veggies like steamed broccoli and cauliflower help flush excess estrogens out. Foods with vitamin E like wheat germ, seeds, nuts and vegetable oils offer more body moisture. Magnesium-rich foods, like almonds, green leafy vegetables, avocado, carrots, citrus fruits, lentils, salmon counteract stress reactions that reduce fertility. Drink a cup of green tea every morning.

Important: Normalize your body weight before conception. Being overweight magnifies pregnancy problems like back and knee pain. Overweight women also increase their risk of developing toxemia or high blood pressure during pregnancy. On the other hand, severely underweight women may risk premature births or low birth weight babies. A woman’s fertility rise may take 6–18 months after her diet change.
Step-by-Step Fertility Diet for Women

You can follow a diet like this for 1–6 months. Add more variety by including your choice of fresh, seasonal organic produce whenever possible. Choose free range meats and seafood from uncontaminated waters as much as possible. **Note:** Pesticide residues on commercially grown foods can disrupt conception efforts and possibly affect the future hormonal health of a developing child.

**On rising:** Have a cup of green tea every morning. Add 1 tsp. of royal jelly or one vial **Prince of Peace Red Ginseng Royal Jelly** for extra fertility help.

**Breakfast:** Have some fresh fruit mixed into low fat yogurt; or have my personal breakfast of champions: brown rice, with steamed cruciferous vegetables, sprinkled sea vegetables and a little tamari sauce and fresh ginger.

**Midmorning:** Have fresh carrot juice, red clover infusion (see pg. 43) or **Crystal Star Conceptions™ tea** (highly recommended) with 1 tsp. **Barleans High Lignan Flax Seed Oil** (Omega 3’s). If you’re still hungry, have some crunchy vegetables and a veggie dip.

**Lunch:** Have a turkey, avocado and baby greens sandwich or salad; or a seafood and veggie pasta salad; or a light oriental soup and salad, with sea veggies and rice crackers.

**Midafternoon:** Have another cup of red clover infusion, red raspberry tea or **Crystal Star Conceptions™ tea** (highly recommended).

**Dinner:** have a Chinese stir fry with dark greens and mushrooms, and miso soup with sea greens chopped on top. Or, have baked or poached seafood with steamed cruciferous vegetables and brown rice or couscous; or a vegetarian quiche with whole grain crust and small salad.

**Before bed:** have a glass of mineral water, or a relaxing herb tea like chamomile tea or **Crystal Star Stress Arrest™ tea**.

Supplement Choices for Women’s Fertility

Women’s bodies respond well to gentle whole herb remedies for infertility problems rather than many high potency supplements. Remember, B vitamins are a critical part of women’s reproductive health and minerals like calcium should be in ample supply as needs increase during pregnancy.
Choose 2-3 recommendations. For detailed information on how herbs work for fertility, see pg. 42-47 of this book.

**Preconception (normalize menstrual cycle):**

- **Vitex extract** promotes ovulation and helps correct luteal phase defect; using vitamin C 750mg daily helps promote ovulation in women with luteal phase defect.

- **Balance hormones:** Crystal Star Female Harmony™ caps 4 daily with Evening Primrose Oil for EFAs, 4 daily; or Crystal Star Pro-Est Balance™ roll-on or Moon Maid Pro-meno Wild Yam cream for 1 month with extra B6 to reduce chance of miscarriage. Pure Essence Labs Fem Creme natural progesterone cream helps avoid miscarriage caused by luteal phase failure. For more on reducing miscarriage risk, see pg. 66 of this book.

- **Increase libido to maximize conception potential:** High Potency Royal Jelly 2 tsp. daily - try Prince of Peace Red Ginseng, Royal Jelly vials; Aromatherapy rose oil; or Histidine 1000mg daily for more sexual enjoyment. Red raspberry tea helps tone uterus (excellent results). Licorice extract helps hormone balance for polycystic ovary syndrome.

- **Women’s fertility nutrient boosters:** red clover infusion; Crystal Star Conceptions™ tea, (add ashwagandha extract drops); Herbs America Maca Magic caps for a fertility and libido lift (highly recommended); Crystal Star Ocean Minerals™ caps (iodine, potassium, silica from sea veggies) to guard against birth defects. Consider a multivitamin-mineral supplement for women's fertility like Fairhaven Health FertilAid for women. Vitamin E 400IU 2x daily; B-complex, like Nature’s Secret Ultimate B with extra B6 100mg, PABA 400mg (75% effective in 1 small trial) and folic acid 800mcg daily. Country Life sublingual B-12, 2500mcg daily. Lane Labs AdVACAL Ultra with magnesium (highly recommended). Cayenne-ginger caps, motherwort tea, hawthorn extract 4x daily for a feeling of well-being.

- **Protease enzymes,** like Crystal Star Dr. Enzyme™ with Protease & Bromelain or Transformation PureZyme caps, taken between meals keep fibroid growths in check and cleanse toxins in the bloodstream. See ovarian cysts, fibroids and endometriosis pages in this book for more information on how to overcome these problems for healthy conception.
**Important fertility guidelines for both sexes:** Avoid or reduce consumption of tobacco, caffeine, and alcohol. (Moderate wine is ok until conception.) Take care to keep your personal environment free of toxins. Living near toxic landfills increases risk for DNA abnormalities like Down syndrome. Both men and women should limit their saturated fat intake to about 10% of the diet. Especially reduce sugary foods (artificial sweeteners like aspartame are particularly hazardous for your unborn child) and meats that are regularly laced with nitrates and-or hormones, like red meats, and smoked, cured and processed meats. Much of the research we’re seeing today shows a high intake of antioxidants sets a good stage for fertility. Vitamin C, in particular, is an important fertility nutrient for men and women. Semen contains high levels of vitamin C. Low levels of vitamin C contribute to the death of the corpus luteum (a mature ovarian follicle that ruptures to release a potentially mature egg) in research animals. Both sexes should be sure to eat plenty of vitamin C rich foods like citrus fruits, papaya, kiwi, potatoes, cauliflower and broccoli to help overcome nutrient deficiency based infertility. Zinc is an important fertility nutrient for both sexes. Zinc is important to synthesis of DNA and RNA. Zinc supplements have been shown to improve fertility in women. Zinc deficiency is also linked to men’s infertility. Incorporate these zinc-rich foods in your diet: nuts, seeds, high quality seafood and shellfish, nutritional yeast, and eggs.

**Bodywork and Relaxation Therapies**

Bodywork therapies are an integral part of natural healing’s success for infertility. Therapies like acupuncture and massage have documented success for many types of infertility and are a viable choice for reproductive
health. Here are a few examples of bodywork therapies you can start using today to improve your fertility status.

Exercise recharges the cardiovascular system and boosts testosterone and sperm production. In one study, 78 healthy, but sedentary men were studied during nine months of regular exercise. The men exercised for 60 minutes a day, three days a week. Every man in the study reported significantly enhanced sexuality, including increased frequency, performance and satisfaction. The rise in sexuality was even correlated with how much each man’s fitness improved!

Exercise is also a great way to keep body fat down, another conception inhibitor. Body fat levels just 10-15% above normal can disrupt fertility efforts for both partners. I think exercising together is a great way for couples experiencing fertility problems to enhance their sex life. Get light exercise, and morning sunshine every day possible. Deep breathing exercises, especially during long walks together, are very beneficial. But don’t get too carried away, excessive exercise can disrupt fertility efforts for both sexes.

Deep tissue massage

Deep tissue massage can help clear blocked fallopian tubes and increase pregnancy chances. Female infertility is routinely caused by pelvic adhesions, blocked tubes or other types of trauma or inflammation in the reproductive organs. While long believed that surgery procedures were the only way to even partially decrease these problems, bodywork therapists have found deep tissue work can not only decrease mechanical blockages, but also reduce pelvic pain and improve sexual arousal and orgasm for women. What a bonus!

In a preliminary study conducted by Clear Passages in Florida, of 8 infertile women treated with deep tissue massage, 50% gave birth to healthy, full term babies. (Current fertility technologies offer about 20%-40% success rate.) Subsequent studies show even better outcomes, with up to 70% of patients becoming pregnant naturally within 1 year. More good news: WURN Treatment is more affordable than IVF, at about $3500 for a course, and is more likely to be covered by insurance. The WURN technique can also improve your chances of conception if you’re planning to do IVF. Larry and Belinda Wurn, the husband-wife team running Clear Passages, have their research published on Medscape General Medicine, Ob/Gyn & Women’s Health on the web for couples wanting more information. Also, check out www.clearpassage.com.
The Amazing Role of Acupuncture

Try acupuncture if you are considering IVF. Acupuncture has a centuries long history of safety and effectiveness, and it may help you get pregnant faster if you’re using IVF. In China, where IVF is not common, acupuncture and herbal remedies are the first choice for infertility problems. A handful of studies from the U.S. and Europe reveal that acupuncture enhances the success rates of IVF treatments. Tests show receiving acupuncture 30 minutes before and after IVF increases chances of successful embryo implantation and reduces the chance of miscarriage. The best results are achieved when treatments are received once a week during the month or two leading up to your treatment, and then continued once or twice a week through the whole cycle.

How does acupuncture work for fertility?

Most practitioners of Chinese medicine view infertility as a weakness of qi (vital energy) in the liver and kidneys. Acupuncturists insert tiny needles into various points on the body meridians to help normalize the flow of qi. Acupuncture helps release stagnancy patterns or obstructions in the body, and reduce anxiety that may be preventing conception. Infertility caused by poor blood flow to the uterus can be greatly improved through acupuncture treatments. Acupuncture also increases circulation to the ovaries, allowing for healthier eggs, and to the uterus, strengthening the lining so it will be able to carry a pregnancy to full term. There are many reports of acupuncture improving sperm count, motility and morphology (shape) for infertile or subfertile men. In one 1987 study reported in the Journal of Chinese Acupuncture, of 248 men who received acupuncture to treat infertility, 89 were cured, 77 made significant improvements and 85 experienced no change. Other studies show similar positive results for men. Using meditation with fertility treatments may also yield good results.
The Mind Body Connection

Scientific evidence is piling up showing the mind-body connection is important for conception, even for women who use fertility drugs. A study published in *Fertility and Sterility* found women who expressed negative emotions at the beginning of IVF treatment were 93% less likely to have a baby than those who expressed positive feelings. In another study funded by the **National Institute of Mental Health**, over half of couples with fertility problems gave birth one year after joining a mind-body program, compared to 20% in the control group. Alice Domar, author of *Healing Mind, Healthy Woman*, documents a 55% success rate for women using relaxation techniques to help them get pregnant, compared to a 20% success rate for women who used only medical fertility technologies.

Women who feel undeserving of having a child or who have chronic intense stress, guilt or other emotional issues also may have a tougher time getting pregnant. Anxiety, depression and feeling of inadequacy about infertility only compounds the problem. In these cases, make a conscious effort to clean up the emotional clutter to clear your fertility pathways for your own future and that of your child. Sessions with skilled practitioner of guided imagery or family therapist can produce good results. Prayer, meditation, keeping a journal and relaxation techniques like deep breathing can also reduce stress that may be decreasing fertility.

Having said that, our burgeoning population shows that many “stressed out” women can and do get pregnant all the time. Still, for women who are having difficulty getting pregnant reducing stress can make all the difference. Some women are just too overworked to conceive. Women with infertility issues who are working 60-80 hours a week might want to look at their inability to conceive as a sign from their bodies that they need to take time out from their jobs to nurture themselves. And women who are already pregnant or planning to get pregnant need to make a conscious decision to put their mind-body health first for their own sake and that of their child. A new study in the journal *Child Development* shows that high stress during pregnancy increases a child’s susceptibility to ADHD later in life.

A highly nutritious diet and relaxation therapies can make all the difference for couples experiencing fertility difficulties. Whole herbs are another good choice with profound effects for enhanced fertility and sexuality.
Fertility Enhancing Herbs

Whole herbs address a multitude of infertility causes: hormone imbalance; body toxicity; stress; female obstructions and scarring. While herbal medicines have been used safely for preconception needs for thousands of years, some herbs should never be used during pregnancy because they are too strong for a fetus or they can stimulate uterine contractions. For a complete list of herbs to avoid during pregnancy, see pg.106.

Herbs can help a man overcome low sperm count or declining fertility, even sexual performance problems. Herbs are an especially good choice for older men wanting to sustain virility, energy and potency during andropause.

Women’s Whole Herb Choices

**Black cohosh and blue cohosh** (*Cimicifuga spp.*) are toning herbs for female imbalances like prolapsed uterus and fibroids. **Crystal Star Women’s Best Friend™** with black cohosh can help the body normalize from prolapses or fibroids, but should not be used during pregnancy. See pg. 57 for details on herbal formulas for fibroids and endometriosis. Black and blue cohosh are also sometimes used to aid in childbirth, but I only suggest this under the guidance of a clinical herbalist with experience in midwifery.

**Dong quai** (*Angelica sinensis*), used extensively in Traditional Chinese Medicine for female complaints, helps to regulate ovulation, menstruation and can tone a weak uterus. Dong quai is particularly helpful for women stopping oral contraceptive use. As an herbal source of vitamin B12 and folic acid, dong quai can help treat infertility secondary to anemia. Note: Dong quai can promote menstrual flow in some women. In many cases, this is a good thing, clearing blood stagnation that affects fertility. (From a TCM perspective, stagnant blood is a major cause of infertility in women.) This is normally a temporary reaction and a sign that the body is normalizing. Having a cup or two of nettles tea can help curtail heavy flow. For the best results, seek guidance from a professional herbalist trained in TCM. I myself use only whole dong quai in herbal combinations, like **Crystal Star Conceptions™** tea, which is well tolerated by women for their self-care. Avoid using dong quai with blood-thinning medications.

**Green tea** (*Camellia sinensis*) tastes great, is widely available and it may increase your chances of getting pregnant. Research on green tea already shows good results for conception. A study from the *American Journal of Public Health* shows drinking just 1/2 cup or more of green tea daily can
double the odds of conception during one cycle. As an antioxidant, green tea may help repair free radical damage linked to infertility problems in men and women. Don’t overdo it though. Just 1–2 cups a day is fine. Excess caffeine from tea can decrease fertility.

**False Unicorn** (*Chamalerium luteum*) has been used for centuries as a fertility aid. Specifically, it is a uterine tonic that decreases pelvic congestion. Clinical herbalists use false unicorn to help prevent miscarriage caused by uterine weakness. False unicorn can also be used to regulate menstruation and to strengthen the uterine lining. Dosage: 5–30 drops of extract daily. During pregnancy, use false unicorn only in the last few weeks to prepare for labor, or with advice from a clinical herbalist.

**Licorice root** (*Glycerrhiza glabra*), used in Chinese herbal formulas to harmonize the activity of individual herbs, is a menstruation regulator with anti-inflammatory properties. It offers balancing activity for estrogen and testosterone levels, and specifically benefits women with infertility related to Polycystic Ovary Syndrome. Licorice root works well in an extract. Try 1-1.5 tsp. 3x daily. (Contraindicated if you have high blood pressure).

**Red clover** (*Trifolium pratense*) is best known today as a hormonal balancer for menopausal women, but it can also be used to promote fertility. Red clover is rich in plant estrogens which can promote fertility in women with estrogen deficiency. Wise Woman Susun Weed reports conception enhancing results for women who drink up to 1-4 cups a day of a strong red clover blossoms infusion. Weed’s recipe? She adds 1 oz. by weight of dried red clover blossoms to a quart sized canning jar, fills the jar with boiling water, screws on a lid and lets the mixture sit overnight or for at least four hours. For improved palatability, she adds a teaspoon or two of peppermint leaves. Weed explains the dried blossoms are especially helpful for women with scarring of the fallopian tubes, irregular menstrual cycle or “unexplained” infertility.

A **red raspberry** (*Rubus idaeus*) tea combination: Herbal teas, the gentlest of all herbal mediums, can maximize your conception efforts. **CRYSTAL STAR CONCEPTIONS™ TEA** is a broad spectrum formula that helps maximize conception potential without the side effects or risk of fertility drugs. Red raspberry has a long history of safe and effective use as a natural fertility enhancer, and is included as a nutritive, astringent herb that helps prepare the uterus for healthy conception. Sea greens and whole herbs in the blend are loaded with B vitamins, EFAs, and critical minerals like...
calcium, silica, magnesium and iodine to shore up nutrient supply and establish a body environment favorable for conception. For best results, take Conceptions™ tea for 3 to 4 months prior to conception while following a “fertility nutrition” program for women. Adding Ashwagandha drops to the tea can give it an extra “fertility boost.” Ashwagandha, the great Ayurveda tonic (especially for sexual energy) has been successfully used to treat female infertility for many years.

Squaw vine: Native Americans used squaw vine (Mitchella repens) as a fertility tonic for women. It can also be helpful during the last trimester of pregnancy to strengthen the uterine muscles and facilitate child birth. Interestingly, squaw vine both improves uterine tone and relaxes spasms. See pg. 105 for information on squaw vine’s use during late pregnancy.

Tribulus terrestris (Puncture vine), an herb native to India and Africa increases sex drive without the side effects of traditional hormone drugs like weight gain (estrogen) or masculinization (testosterone). In one study, 2/3 of women treated with tribulus report renewed sexual interest! There’s also some evidence which suggests tribulus may help regulate ovulation. Dosage: Source Naturals Tribulus Terrestris is a good choice, 750-1500mg daily.

True unicorn (Aletris farinosa), a widely used digestive tonic by the Native American Catawba, is also a useful herb for uterine prolapse, irregular menstrual cycle, and threatened miscarriage. Use just 1/4 tsp. of powdered root for one cup of tea. Best under guidance from a clinical herbalist. Overdosage can cause diarrhea and vomiting.

Vitex extract (Vitex agnus), known as “chaste tree,” was used in the days of the ancient Greeks to suppress libido. But modern research on vitex reveals it can help normalize ovulation for women with ovulatory disorders. It has specific benefits for improving a short luteal phase and Polycystic Ovary Syndrome. Vitex works by stimulating luteinizing hormone production and reducing release of follicle-stimulating hormone. It also supports pituitary gland health and encourages estrogen and progesterone balance in the body. A 1993 study from Hamburg reveals vitex also helps reduce high prolactin levels, linked to women’s infertility. Two double-blind studies show vitex extract increases a woman’s fertility and chances of successful conception. Dosage: Take 10-15 drops of the extract, 2–3 times a day for the first two weeks of your cycle.

Wild yam: Before synthetic hormones became widely available, whole wild yam (Dioscorea villosa) was used as the source material to make early
contraceptive pills. Wild yam contains diosgenin, a saponin with hormone-like effects which can be converted to progesterone in a laboratory. While scientists have shown that diosgenin cannot convert into progesterone in the female body, my experience and that of many women I have worked with over the years shows me that wild yam offers mild progesterone balancing activity without the side effects of hormone drugs. Regarding fertility, its action is complex. In large doses (3000mg or more daily), wild yam has anti-fertility action, but in small doses (50 to 100mg), it can help promote conception. For fertility purposes, use whole wild yam in combinations like Conceptions™ tea or use it only in the first half of the menstrual cycle (before ovulation).

**Note:** If you’re worried by the 1999 studies from Loma Linda University linking herbs like St. John’s wort, ginkgo biloba and echinacea to infertility, know that the herbs were only tested in a test tube on hamster eggs. It is highly improbable that the same herbs used in a living animal or human would have the same effect. Whole herbs, as gentle healing foods, are processed by our enzymatic systems… neutralizing, in the vast majority of cases, potential for toxicity.
Men experience a gradual decline in fertility as they age. Tests show men over 50 have 20% reduction in semen volume. Men at 30 have a 40% chance of abnormal sperm motility, men at 50 have an 80% chance. Still, advances in fertility technologies mean men who are producing any sperm at all have a very good chance of having a biological child. In addition, numerous plant medicines normalize sperm quantity and quality for healthy conception. Many herbs also enhance libido and sexual performance for men.

**Damiana** (*Turnera diffusa*), used by the Mayan people of Central America, is a useful libido promoter for both men and women trying to conceive. With mild testosterone-like effects, Damiana helps restore health to the reproductive organs and is especially beneficial for men who suffer from impotence or premature ejaculation. I recommend damiana in herbal combinations or by itself in capsules or in a tea. 300-600mg daily is a good dose.

**Ginseng** species nourish and tone the male reproductive system. Research published in the *Journal of Urology* shows red panax ginseng improves erectile function for impotent men. **Chinese ginseng** (*Panax g.*), has been shown to increase sperm count, improve sperm motility, decrease prolactin levels, and boost testosterone concentration. Animal tests reveal Siberian *eleutherococcus*, a ginseng-like plant from Russia, produces an almost 30% increase in semen production and a 50% drop in stillborn births. I recommend a ginseng-based combination like Crystal Star Male Performance™ capsules. Imperial Elixir, Superior Trading and Prince of Peace also offer high-quality ginseng products.

**Guizhi-Fuling-Wan:** The Chinese combination Guizhi-Fuling-Wan (Cinnamon and Poria Formula) has been shown clinically to reduce infertility caused by varicocele. Test participants took 7.5 grams of the combination daily for at least 3 months. 80% of patients overcame their varicocele and there was a 71% increase in sperm concentration and 62% increase in sperm motility. In TCM, Guizhi-Fuling-Wan is used to improve circulation in the lower abdomen and decrease blood stagnation. Consider Plum Flowers Cinnamon & Poria teapills, available at natural foods stores.

**Peruvian maca** (*Lepidium meyenii*), often called “the herbal viagra,” boosts sex drive and performance for older men. Maca is excellent as an endurance enhancer and can improve erectile dysfunction.
research reveals animals with low testosterone given maca experience a significant improvement in sexual activity. Further, tests show taking 1500–3000mg of maca daily for 4 months can increase seminal volume, sperm count and sperm motility in men. *LANE LABS FERTIL MALE* with maca is clinically shown to promote sperm count and motility and we personally know of cases where it’s been used with good results. *HERBS AMERICA MACA MAGIC* is another high quality maca product we’ve worked with.

**Pygeum** (*Pygeum africanum*) is used extensively in Europe for prostate enlargement. Research shows it balances prostatic fluid pH, and even improves the ability of sperm to survive outside the body. Pygeum is also helpful in cases of impotence. **Saw palmetto berries** (*Serenoa repens*), native to the U.S. and the West Indies, are clinically shown to reduce prostate swelling and related symptoms, like difficult or frequent urination. Saw palmetto is also a primary tissue builder and gland stimulating herb for toning the male reproductive system. Saw palmetto and pygeum are combined in *CRYSTAL STAR PROSTATE PROTECTOR™* capsules.

Ayurvedic **tribulus terrestris**, strengthens the reproductive system for men and women. It is proven to improve both low sperm count and poor sperm motility. Additionally, research shows tribulus can improve sexual desire and activity in cases of prostatitis, shrunken testes, and syndromes involving undescended testes. It even increases sperm motility and ejaculate quality in men after surgery for a varicocele (varicose vein within spermatic cord), another common cause of male infertility. The researchers used dosages of 1500mg for 60-90 days. *SOURCE NATURALS TRIBULUS TERRERTRIS* is a good brand to try.