

Fertility and the Plant-Based Diet

Are Vegetarians and Vegans More Fertile Than Others?

by Steven Lemberg, MD

Current research has found that eating more foods from the vegetable kingdom while reducing consumption of foods of animal origin may improve fertility. There are those who question whether a vegan diet, one that eschews all meat, poultry, fish, dairy products and eggs actually works against one's ability to conceive, or is, in some way, too extreme. The answer to this question is a resounding "NO." In fact, more and more evidence suggests the opposite is true: plant-based foods enhance fertility. Therefore, vegans and vegetarians are actually at an advantage when it comes to fertility.

In my 34 years of medical practice, I have never seen a healthier diet than the raw, living foods vegan diet outlined by Hippocrates Health Institute. I have happily embraced this fare in my own life. Every one of these plant foods is powerful, nourishing and loaded with oxygen, enzymes, alkalinity, antioxidants, phytochemicals and healthy hormones.

It makes sense that the human body, and all of our organs, thrive on this type of nourishment, made up of the best foods from the land, the oceans and fresh water. This food invigorates our bodies, which are often depleted from toxic exposure to the environment, improper nutrition, chronic stress, lack of exercise, poor sleep and inadequate relaxation.

These nutrients provide energy and myriad healing factors to organs that have been operating under stress and poor nutrition for a long time. All the tissues and organs of the body respond to better nutrition; these are, in fact, the building blocks of the organs themselves. If you provide the best construction materials, you build the strongest, best-functioning organs. This applies to our reproductive systems, as well.

Men who are vegan have lost the excess fat that impedes athletic performance. Sexual vigor increases as the man has more energy, better circulation and a better self-image. All these factors improve libido. The same is true for both sexes; the healthier functioning ovaries in

women should produce healthier eggs and the male should make healthier sperm. Ultimately, even the egg and sperm are made up of the nutrients we consume.

A well-planned vegan diet includes all the special nutrients needed for conceiving a child and maintaining a healthy pregnancy. In fact, this is the healthiest diet for humans in all stages of life.

The important thing is to be nutritionally balanced and—especially for women—to maintain a healthy weight while trying to conceive. By incorporating great variety in one's plant-based diet and exercising effective supplementation, all vital specific nutrients can be obtained, curbing infertility. These nutrients include

Four important types of plant foods to maximize fertility:

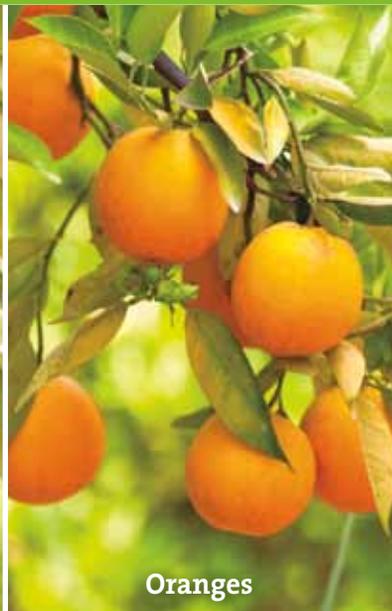
1. **Whole sprouted grains** are good for insulin function. These include millet, quinoa, buckwheat and amaranth.
2. **Healthy fats** reduce inflammation and increase insulin sensitivity. These include avocados, nuts and sesame and pumpkin seeds.
3. **Folate** is an important nutrient to load up on before pregnancy to prevent birth defects.
Folate-rich foods include green leafy vegetables, strawberries and citrus fruits such as oranges.
4. **Protein from plant sources** such as beans, peas, nuts, sprouts and algae (both sea and fresh water varieties).



Millet



Avocados



Oranges



Almonds

iodine, vitamin B12, iron, vitamin D, omega 3 fatty acids (flax seeds, chia seeds, green and blue-green algae, walnuts) and calcium. These nutrients are already present in abundance in the Hippocrates diet.

It has long been suspected that a plant-based diet leads to enhanced fertility. The Nurse's Health Study supports this premise. This study found that women who consumed protein from vegetarian sources rather than from meat had a lower incidence of infertility related to problems with ovulation than a cohort group who consumed more meat. In fact, a high percentage of infertility is accounted for by problems with ovulation.

There may be several reasons why plant-based diets inherently have some advantage to those wanting to conceive. People eating a plant-based diet generally maintain a healthier weight than those consuming foods of animal origin. Maintaining a healthy weight confers some advantage when it comes to fertility. Conversely, the evidence shows that being overweight or obese decreases fertility in men and women.

Animal protein, which is high in saturated fats, can increase insulin resistance, a known culprit in infertility. When there's more insulin circulating in your body, it can affect the hormones that regulate ovulation. Insulin resistance is one component

of polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), another leading cause of infertility in women. Seafood, meat, and poultry also contain chemicals such as dioxin, which can adversely affect hormones. Vegetables, on the other hand, contain more protective antioxidants, alkalinity and phytochemicals.

The key with any health-enhancing program is balance. If your nutritional program is well-balanced, including adequate supplementation, exercise, stress reduction through yoga and meditation, adequate sleep, rest and recreation, you can improve your health so much that "everything" functions better, including your reproductive health.

Enjoy the process! 



Healthy Changes Spark New Life

Infertility

Iuliana Santana : Pembroke Pines, Florida

My husband, Juvenal, and I would like to share the story of our daughter Luna Stela, our 100% organic, vegan baby. She was born June 2009 under a full moon. Just two and a half years before that, our doctors had told us that we would never be able to achieve pregnancy in the traditional way. Ever.

What we were left with was attempting In Vitro Fertilization (IVF). Our search for a child took us through two cycles of trying IVF, many thousands of dollars and immeasurable heartache.

The enormous amounts of drugs from the IVF attempts took a toll on my body, mind and spirit. Fed up with mainstream society's solution to infertility, my husband, Juvenal, and I sought out answers. Those answers led us to becoming vegans. We had met a vegetarian couple while going

through our first IVF attempt, and this piqued my curiosity about the vegetarian lifestyle.

Our vegan lives started January 2008. We did our best at the beginning and then one day a dear coworker and friend, also vegetarian, gave me my first copy of *Healing Our World* magazine. We came to Hippocrates Health Institute looking for a miracle.

Our first visit to Hippocrates was in April 2008 for a one-week stay. We learned a tremendous amount in that short time and made many adjustments to our diet. We started having wheatgrass every day, green juices, lots of sprouts and considerably reduced the amount of fruit we consumed. We not only changed our diet, we changed our lifestyle. We got rid of the microwave, plastic food containers, the television in our bedroom and the cordless phones. We threw

out all the toxic grooming products and replaced them with organic ones. We stopped swimming in chlorinated pools and bought a new non-metal organic mattress and organic linens. And it worked. Five months later we found out we were expecting our first baby.

Our friends and family who knew about our ordeal assumed that we would go back to our old ways. Why would we do that after seeing how green living had improved our lives and our bodies? I couldn't do that to my baby and I wouldn't do that to myself.

We are presently about 75% raw and feel wonderful. My husband lost about 20 pounds and 70 points off his cholesterol. More important is what we have gained. Our baby girl is now 18 months old and thriving. A true miracle of nature, vegan nature, that is. 