

Trying to Conceive – typical behaviour

The most common behaviour besides stopping contraception, naturally, is to have more sex (58.4%). Interestingly 63.7% of men report having more sex whereas only 53% of women do.

Half of respondents took up eating a healthier diet (50%), (40.8% of men, 59% of women)

Very few people attempted to change their working patterns (7.4%) and just 22.9% attempted to reduce their stress levels, as is generally advised.

Alcohol

Drinking reduces fertility, therefore in an ideal world, couples trying to conceive would reduce or stop drinking altogether.

Proxceed Plus found that in the UK:

- 57.4% still drink
- 13.5% were non-drinkers in any case
- Meaning only 29.2% gave up drinking when trying to conceive
- 33% drank just 1-6 units (for women) 1-9 units (men)
- 7% drank more than 14 units (for women) or 21 units (men)

Men are by far the worst offenders with 71% still drinking (11.8% don't drink at all) versus just 43.8% of women who continue (15% don't drink at all).

Just 16.9% of men stopped drinking, whereas 41% of women stopped when trying for a baby

The heaviest drinkers are in Scotland (12.5% more than 14 units) and in the North West (12.3% more than 14 units)

For reference, total still drinking:

- East – 64.3%
- Wales – 62.2%
- North West – 62.3%
- Yorkshire – 61.2%
- North East – 58.4%
- South West – 58.3%
- Midlands – 56.8%
- Scotland – 54.7%
- South East – 53.6%
- London – 52.7%
- Northern Ireland – 45.5%

What do men do?

- 71% of men continue to drink when trying for a baby compared to 43% of women. Just 16% of men give up drinking, compared to 41% of women who gave up drink completely.
- 82% of men don't take any supplements (58.3% of women DO)
- Less than 18% made any attempt to reduce their stress (26.8% of women DO try to reduce stress)
- Only 10.2% wore looser clothing

- 16.1% continue to smoke! (Quite shockingly, 10% of women also continue to smoke)
- 15.5% continued to eat unhealthy food
- Almost 5% continued to take recreational drugs (1.6% of women)
- 1 in 10 do no exercise. Women are worse in this regard with 12.5% doing no exercise at all.

All in all, although slightly better than expected, men are not match fit and they are nowhere near making the same effort as their partners.

Supplements

Studies by the Cochrane Library suggest that 30-80% of male subfertility is due to oxidative stress on sperm and that antioxidants such as those found in Proxceed Plus can help to mitigate those effects. It has become customary for women to begin taking supplements such as folic acid when trying to conceive: 58% of women do. Only 17% of men take any supplements, leaving lots of room for improvement.

Sex

It is well documented that the process of trying for a baby can upset people's sex lives. The pressure is on to get results, leading many to feel strained. Experts recommend maintaining a happy and healthy sex life when trying to conceive.

16% of people said they felt under pressure when actively trying for a baby and 16% said they felt sex had become a chore when trying for a baby. 14% of men found it a chore, compared to 17.5% of women.

Interestingly, more than a quarter of people said they felt that sex became more satisfying for them. Despite some of the fun going out of sex, it seems that sex with a purpose is just more meaningful. Unfortunately, 1 in 10 find the pressure of trying for a baby makes sex less satisfying.

The good news is that around 40% reported no big difference in their sex lives when trying for a baby, although 13.5% reported having more morning sex.

Interestingly, men found sex more satisfying when trying for a baby 27% compared to 24% of women.

58.4% of couples reported having more sex when trying for a baby, although 63% of men believe that they do, compared to just 53% of women. Men appear to believe that they have more sex in the evening (24%) but only 17% of women believe they do. Men likewise believe that they have more sex in the morning (16%) whereas only 10.5% of women believe that they do.

Having sex in the morning is important as studies indicate that men have a slightly higher sperm count then. Also, waiting until late in the evening can often end in no action when one or the other partner is tired or has had a long day.

Perception of time taken to conceive

Statistically, a fertile healthy couple are more likely to fail to conceive in the first month of trying than to succeed.

Realistically, out of healthy couples who have regular sex, only 80% will conceive within a year.

Staggeringly 34.8% of couples thought it would take them just two months to conceive. 50.3% of couples nationally thought it would take only three months to conceive. 80.7% believed it would take just 6 months. Only 7.5% of people believe it may take 12 or more months to fall pregnant. Slightly more reassuringly were 15.9% who more realistically believed it would take up to six months. 60.9% of men believed it would take just three months to conceive, compared to 45.7% of women.

More than a third of people in the UK end up taking longer to conceive than they anticipated (34%). Women were more likely to be disappointed by the amount of time it takes to conceive, with more than 37% of women taking longer than they expected to conceive.

Age to start a family

People were most likely to start trying for a baby between the ages of 24 and 27, with well over a quarter of respondents reporting being in that age group to begin. More than a third of women were aged between 24 and 27 when they started trying for a baby whereas 26.7% of men started trying when they were aged between 28 and 31. More than 50.3% of all respondents were trying from age 24 to 31. Just one fifth started trying at or around the age of 32 and of those only 14.7% of women. The mean age for women was 27.3, the mean for men 29.5.

According to the Office of National Statistics, the average birth age of women in the UK in 2010 was 29.5 but that includes all births, not just first timers.

Regrets about delaying

About one in five people polled regretted not starting a family earlier. Almost ¾ of people have no regrets about starting when they did though probably because the event is so rewarding in any case. There is almost no split at all between men and women although slightly more men regret not starting slightly earlier.

Reasons for delaying

About one third of people in the UK report that they did not delay the start of their family. Of the two thirds of people who did delay starting a family, the primary reason for doing so was to enjoy their lives and make the most of their freedom (22.9%). 5% more women than men report delaying starting their family. Men and women were equally enthusiastic about making the most of their lives before having children.

A further 22.7% just didn't feel ready and one in five felt too young. Men were more likely to feel unready, with just one in five women reporting that as a reason not to start a family. Only 18% of women said that they felt too young.

Other key reasons were being unsure that they had met the right partner (18%), wanting to buy a house first (17%), being unable to afford it (13%) and wanting to focus on careers (12%). Women were far more concerned than men about having met the right person but were much less concerned about the need to buy a house (14% women compared to 20% of men). Only about 10% of women worried about being able to afford a baby, compared to almost 15% of men. 12.7% of women cited their career as a reason to delay starting a family, compared to 11% of men.

Could your partner do more?

15% of men and women felt that their partners could do more when trying to conceive indicating that while there is plenty of room for improvement, expectations remain low.

Survey

This survey was conducted by Proxceed Plus with Opinion Matters and polled 1001 adults across the UK, approximately 50/50 men and women.

Proxceed Plus

Proxceed Plus is the world's leading male fertility supplement. It contains a specially formulated blend of L-Carnitine, an essential amino acid, plus vitamins and minerals that have been developed following a large amount of research into creating the optimal performance in supporting sperm health. www.proxceedplus.co.uk

Proxceed Plus contains:

Zinc, L-Carnitine, Acetyl L-Carnitine, Fructose, Citric Acid, Selenium, Folic Acid, Vitamin B12 and Coenzyme Q10.

This special mix of micronutrients has been clinically developed to help support normal sperm development by enhancing and protecting energy metabolism, improving sperm maturation and functioning and protecting sperm from free radical injury.

sigma-tau Healthscience

sigma-tau Healthscience, the makers of Proxceed Plus, is the specialist division of a leading pharmaceutical company. The company has spent over 50 years researching and understanding health and the role of human cellular metabolism in maintaining health. Consequently, sigma-tau Healthscience understands what can affect the metabolic processes.

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