

## Four Month Pre-Conception Plan

“Many Doctors, Nutritionists and Therapists are increasingly advising both partners to follow pre-conception plans and not try to get pregnant during that time. Get into tip top health before trying to conceive. I recommend the use of this pre-conception plan for all my Fertility Reflexology clients whether they are attempting to conceive naturally, or planning to undergo a course of IVF treatment.”

### Introduction

Dr Marilyn Glenville, an expert on Fertility, Nutrition and Women's Health, believes that following the advice below will improve general health and maximise fertility. You can read more about this in her book “Getting Pregnant Faster” and also on her website [www.marilynglenville.com](http://www.marilynglenville.com). The rationale for the Pre-Conception Plan lasting for 4 months is that sperm take 3-4 months to develop and mature, so sperm that is ejaculated today will have been made 3-4 months ago.

### Eat a Healthy Diet

Eat organic food wherever possible. Non-organic meat and dairy contain a lot of hormones which can interfere with the body's hormone system. Eat plenty of organic vegetables, fruit, and protein sources (meat and fish, lentils, beans, quinoa). Pesticides on fruit and vegetables are hormone disrupters and can cause problems with reproductive hormone levels. Avoid processed foods if possible.

### Reduce Toxins

Give up smoking, alcohol, caffeinated tea and coffee – all of these can reduce fertility. Smoking can reduce fertility by as much as 40%. Avoid workplace and environmental pollution. Store food and drink filtered water from glass containers, avoid plastic or cling film which can contain xenoestrogens. If possible, avoid potential cosmetic toxins such as those found in some hair dyes and nail polishes. As the foetal nervous system begins to develop during the first 4 weeks of pregnancy, it is also advisable to continue to avoid toxins as much as possible once you begin trying to conceive.

### Reduce Stress Levels

Stress produces fight or flight hormones, putting additional stress on the body and giving it something extra to process. Stress hormones can also impact negatively on reproductive hormones.

### Harvard Medical School Mind-Body Institute 1978

*Harvard designed a ten week group program for women with unexplained fertility. They encouraged the women to shift their focus away from stress, and the effort involved in trying to conceive a baby using yoga, guided imagery, relaxation techniques, good nutrition, and education in topics pertinent to fertility. They have an excellent track record for reducing stress levels and 57% of the women became pregnant within six months of completing the ten week course.*

### Maintain a Normal Weight

Being over or underweight are HUGE factors in fertility problems. Both partners should try to lose or gain weight if necessary. Support from a GP may be required if PCOS (Polycystic Ovary Syndrome) is involved as weight loss can be difficult with this condition. Losing weight definitely increases chances of conception – even a small weight loss can trigger ovulation in women who weren't ovulating previously. Increasing weight to a normal level for height can also trigger menstruation and ovulation for underweight women.

### Supplement

Improve and balance your health with a good quality multivitamin and mineral, essential fatty acids (EPA Fish Oil or Flaxseed oil), folic acid (5MTFH is natural activated folate, spinach and kale are rich in folates! if you want to avoid the chemicals of some folic acid supplements) and a good quality preconception supplement. We don't always get enough nutrients from our foods and may need a boost. Dr Marilyn Glenville outlines suggestions and dosage levels in her “Getting Pregnant Faster” book. Coenzyme Q10 is particularly useful for bolstering sperm and energy levels.

Useful blood tests include Vitamin D levels, Vitamin B12 levels, folate and ferritin levels, thyroid function, FSH (follicle stimulating hormone) levels and LH (luteinising hormone) levels.

### Seek Medical Help

If you are struggling to conceive or have recurring miscarriages then medical investigation and diagnosis is important. An underactive thyroid, failure to ovulate or an undetected sexually transmitted disease will hamper the body's ability to get pregnant and stay pregnant. Some medical problems can lead a couple to seek IVF treatment and an earlier diagnosis is more helpful.

## Exercise

Some moderate exercise is important for fitness, weight maintenance, good metabolism and “feel good” endorphins. You will also have more energy.

## Be Positive

“I am healthy and I can get pregnant” is a positive affirmation that many of my clients use. Self-help CD’s for relaxation and fertility issues can be useful to help couples focus on being positive in their journey to conceive.

## Fertility Reflexology

Reflexology is a particularly successful fertility boosting therapy when used in conjunction with a healthy diet and lifestyle. Apart from relaxation, it can also boost blood circulation, help balance hormone levels and regulate the menstrual cycle. It is particularly useful in cases of sub-fertility and can be performed on both partners to promote optimum fertility. Reflexology can also help clients undergoing fertility treatment (IVF, IUI, ICSI and clients on medicated cycles), as the increased blood circulation seems to enhance the effects of medical fertility treatment.

I teach my clients the hand and feet reflexology points for the ovaries, uterus and pituitary gland so they can stimulate their reproductive system between Fertility Reflexology appointments.

## Association of Reflexologists

*The Association of Reflexologists (AoR) has found that on average 50% of clients seeking help through reflexology for infertility; find themselves pregnant within the first 6 months of starting treatment.*

*The AoR has also found reflexology to be of assistance to those women suffering from endometriosis or polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) which can be a primary cause of fertility problems and abdominal discomfort in women.*

## Danish Reflexology Association 1994

*A trial was conducted in Denmark in 1994 by Leila Erikson, Chairman of the Danish Reflexology Association. 108 women under 35 years with no previous children, and that had attempted to become pregnant for more than two years were selected from 260 applicants. 47 of the 108 withdrew. The remaining 61 women were given sixteen 45 minute reflexology treatments over a 7-8 month period. Treatments were given twice a week for 4 weeks, and then 2 treatments were given and timed before ovulation.*

*Nine of the women (15%) became pregnant within six months of starting reflexology treatment. Of two thirds of the women who had menstruation problems 77% experienced an appreciable improvement, with the majority having complete remission from their problems. Three quarters of all the women reported improvements in other ailments such as muscle tension, psychic imbalances, indigestion, poor circulation and general imbalance.*

*Unfortunately the study only ran for 9 months which is a short time frame given that it takes, on average, 5 months for most couples to conceive.*

## Jane Holt Reflexologist, Kingsbridge Devon 2008

*In a two year clinical trial at the IVF Unit of Derriford Hospital in Plymouth, 13 of Jane’s 23 clients became pregnant after she treated them for a variety of fertility problems.*

*Beccy Wellington, 34, a Nurse had four treatments within three weeks and is convinced that the reflexology “got her body into working order” so that she was ready to conceive. She also felt ten times better, more positive and happier with herself.*

*Sometimes our bodies just need a kick start to conceive, other sub fertility problems are more complex and reflexology can play an effective supporting role.*

## Useful Links

NHS guidance for pregnancy: [www.nhs.uk/pregnancy-and-baby-care](http://www.nhs.uk/pregnancy-and-baby-care)

Links to pre-conception planning sites: [www.foresight-preconception.org.uk](http://www.foresight-preconception.org.uk)

Fertility and infertility support: [www.fertilityfriends.co.uk](http://www.fertilityfriends.co.uk)

Women’s health website focussing on the nutritional approaches. My personal favourite and author of “Getting Pregnant Faster”. [www.marilynglennville.com](http://www.marilynglennville.com)

The UK’s independent regulator overseeing fertility treatment and research: [www.hfea.gov.uk](http://www.hfea.gov.uk)

### **Magnets**

Norstar Biomagnetics make "Senza" which is a magnet designed to reduce period pain. It works by drawing oxygenated blood and extra nutrients to the area of pain which is reputedly useful for supporting conception as well. [www.norstar-biomagnetics.co.uk](http://www.norstar-biomagnetics.co.uk)

### **Crystals**

Rose quartz, moon stone and carnelian are popular crystals worn as jewellery and carried as a tumbled stone by women who are trying to conceive. New jade is reported to be good for assisting with fertility and childbirth. If you have a spiritual side then coral is recommended for drawing the baby's spirit to the karmic mother. A tiger's eye is reputedly good for balancing a man's sexual energies.

### **Colour**

Fertility colours include red and orange; wear it as underwear, socks and scarf's if you can't wear it as your main clothing. My husband and I bought a red duvet cover for our bed.

### **Sex**

Professor Robert Winston encouraged couples to have a lot of sex all through the month; the myth that you should only have sex at ovulation time to preserve the quality of the sperm isn't true. Dr Winston's statistics state that:

If you have sex once per month it will take 43 months to conceive.

If you have sex three times per month it will take 15 months to conceive.

If you have sex ten times per month it will take 5 months to conceive.

If you have sex fifteen times per month it will take 3.5 months to conceive.