

Foods That Enhance Male Fertility: A Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Perspective



By Dr. Jeda Boughton, DTCM

From a Chinese medicine perspective foods and herbs are prescribed based on their ability to enhance specific energy systems in the body. Although your ultimate goal is to increase sexual vitality, sperm production and quality, making significant changes to your diet will also dramatically improve your overall health creating a natural balance in the body. There are multiple causes for male infertility, most of which respond well to dietary changes and TCM.

One of the main causes of male infertility is Kidney energy deficiency. This does not refer directly to how your kidney organ is functioning but rather to your meridian or energy system. The kidney system is important because it is the foundation of yin and yang for all of your other organs. Kidney yin is the fundamental substance for birth, growth and reproduction and kidney yang is the motive force of all physiological processes.

Kidney meridian weakness can be caused by a multitude of activities including, too much sexual activity, over consumption of food and alcohol, drug abuse, overwork, unmanageable levels of stress and lack of nourishing foods. Some common signs of kidney meridian dysfunction are moodiness, rapid body temperature changes, low back and chronic knee pain, ringing in ears, fatigue, premature hair loss, low sex drive and infertility. Because the kidney system is the foundation of energy it is always beneficial to support this meridian.

Foods that improve your kidney energy, therefore enhancing your fertility, include:

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| ✓ Anchovy | ✓ Ghee | ✓ Oysters |
| ✓ Chicken | ✓ Kidneys | ✓ Salmon |
| ✓ Eggs | ✓ Liver | ✓ Sardines |
| ✓ Fish | ✓ Mussels | ✓ Trout |
| ✓ Fish oils | | |

It is important that the foods you consume are free range, wild or organically raised to minimize your risk of exposure to hormones, antibiotics and pesticides.

Also incorporate these plant-based foods to enhance fertility:

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| ✓ Avocados | ✓ Sprouts | ✓ Millet |
| ✓ Brussels sprouts | ✓ Barley | ✓ Mung beans |
| ✓ Carrots | ✓ Black beans | ✓ Whole grains |
| ✓ Leafy greens | ✓ Black soybeans | ✓ Almonds |
| | ✓ Legumes | |

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| ✓ Black sesame seeds | ✓ Honey (sparingly) | ✓ Micro algae |
| ✓ Chestnuts | ✓ Mulberries | ✓ Nettles |
| ✓ Coconut | ✓ Raspberries | ✓ Unrefined |
| ✓ Flax seeds | ✓ Barley grass | ✓ Sea salt |
| ✓ Flaxseed oil | ✓ Chlorella | ✓ Wakame |
| ✓ Pumpkin seeds | ✓ Kelp | ✓ Wheat grass |
| ✓ Walnuts | ✓ Kombu | |

All food is best consumed fresh and unprocessed, i.e. not out of a can, jar or box. Please visit www.mytcm.ca for recipe ideas and ways to integrate these foods into vegan, vegetarian and whole food diets.

Foods that harm the reproductive system include:

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| ✗ Alcohol | ✗ Peanuts |
| ✗ Cold and raw foods | ✗ Processed foods |
| ✗ Excess rich foods | ✗ Spicy-hot foods |
| ✗ Foods that you find difficult to digest | ✗ Sugar |
| ✗ Juices | ✗ Too much salt |

Common daily activities that should be avoided when trying to conceive:

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| ✗ Car seat warmers | ✗ Late night eating |
| ✗ Drugs | ✗ Microwave ovens |
| ✗ Hot baths | ✗ Overeating |
| ✗ Hot computers on the lap | ✗ Saunas |
| ✗ Hot tubs | ✗ Smoking |

Remember, it takes three months for your body to produce mature sperm. During this time acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine used in tandem with diet and lifestyle can successfully create balance and enhance fertility.

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For information on fertility for women, refer to Dr. Boughton's article "Fertile Foods: A Traditional Chinese Medicine Approach to Conception", printed in the Choices Market February newsletter.