

# Herbs for Infertility



Laura Murphy and her husband were one of the couples who participated in the clinical trials for a new herbal supplement undertaken by Stanford University in the US. Age 38 at the time, Laura had been told by two doctors that she “would never be able to have children” and only “stood a 15% chance of carrying a baby to term”. By chance, the couple saw the advertisement for the study, and thought “why not?”

Herbs have been used to keep us healthy for thousands of years. They’ve been prescribed to boost immunity, enhance healing, bring pain relief and balance hormones. But the benefits of herbal medicine were overlooked in the early nineteenth century when scientists isolated chemicals from plants. More recently, complimentary and alternative medicine (CAM) including herbal treatments, have enjoyed a revival, and are back on the medicine shelves!

Hot on the agenda is infertility. With as many as one couple in five<sup>1</sup> struggling to conceive after one year of unprotected sex, many face infertility clinics where treatment is not guaranteed and costs are not compensated. Some fertility specialists insist that the only way to manipulate infertility is to use modern technology, while others opt for non-invasive therapy. This means correcting hormone imbalances, counteracting damage to reproductive organs as a result of life-style and stress, promoting ovulation and improving sperm production.

In November, 2004, doctors from Stanford University School of Medicine in the US published trials on a scientific study for a specific nutritional supplement designed to boost fertility in men and women.<sup>2</sup> This supplement is called FertilityBlend and is distributed in South Africa by Nuvida. It is a herbal combination containing several fertility-friendly herbs in the right proportions to enhance fertility in men and women. In the double-blind clinical trials, one third of the women taking the supplement became pregnant within five months. In a similar three month study for men, sperm count and mobility improved in the group taking the supplement compared to the placebo group who did not show any significant changes.

Can herbs help infertility? “Some women simply don’t need aggressive treatment,” said Lynn Westphal, co-author of the project and assistant professor in Stanford’s department of gynaecology and obstetrics.<sup>3</sup> Depending on the cause of infertility, when herbs are prescribed in the right proportions, they can help couples to *optimize* their chances of conceiving naturally. In a paper entitled “Nutritional Issues in Fertility and Natural Alternatives”, three specialists, Lynn Westphal, Mary Lake Polan and Aileen Sontag Trant investigated infertility and suggest that using nutritional supplements is the first step to “improve physiological factors essential to fertility”. They agree that nutritional supplements are the least invasive, best tolerated and most affordable option available to struggling couples.

Infertility can be caused by hormonal imbalances, ovulation problems, poor sperm production and endometrial problems. These can be exaggerated by life-style, poor eating habits and stress. At the start of treatment, couples are advised to stop smoking and drinking, exercise regularly, loose weight and learn to de-stress!

The woman’s formula for FertilityBlend™ contains chasteberry (*Vitex agnus-castus*) to balance hormones and improve ovulation, folic acid for the prevention of certain birth defects, green tea, vitamin E and selenium to improve reproductive health, L-arginine to improve libido and improve the endometrium lining and vitamins B6 and B12, iron, magnesium and zinc which can be directly related to fertility health. The formula for men contains L-carnitine to optimize sperm production and ferulic acid to improve their quality. Vitamin C and E, green tea and selenium for overall reproductive health, Vitamins B6 and B12, folic acid and zinc to improve hormone metabolism, sperm formation and motility.

Laura Murphy found that one month after participating in the study-trial, she was pregnant! Not only did Laura carry her baby to term without any problems, with the help of FertilityBlend™, the couple conceived their second baby one year later after just taking FertilityBlend for one month! Today they boast about their “two beautiful blond boys” who are the centre of their universe!

FertilityBlend™ is available countrywide at Sparkport, Vitacare, pharmacies, health shops and directly from Nuvida Online at [www.nuvida.co.za](http://www.nuvida.co.za) or call 0861 NUVIDA (0861 688 432) or 27-31 562 8105.

For more information, testimonials, clinical study results visit the website or contact Elizabeth Savage by email on [info@nuvida.co.za](mailto:info@nuvida.co.za) or call the above numbers.

## References:

1. US Journal of Women’s Health: Nutritional supplement significantly improves pregnancy rate according to breakthrough study.
2. Clin. Exp. Obst & Gynae. Issue 0390-6663: Double-blind, placebo-controlled study of FertilityBlend: A nutritional supplement for improving fertility in women.
3. The Tennessean: Fertility frustrations give birth to new supplement: February 2004

Burgie Ireland / [bireland@africa.com](mailto:bireland@africa.com) / 083 659 7515