How can I improve my egg quality?

Dr. Tom Hannam

Wondering what you can do to improve your egg quality? Here are some tips we share with our patients:

Lifestyle

When looking to egg quality, the first thing we suggest is that you consider lifestyle.

To some degree, maximizing egg quality is predicated on maximizing your overall health, and the quickest and surest route for most of us to improve our health is to improve our sleep hygiene. That might be as simple as going to bed on time. But, for others, it might be more complicated including minimizing screen time before we go to bed and other rituals that will maximize the likelihood of sufficient sleep. The evidence for cutting out caffeine as it relates to egg quality is poor. That said, most of the literature points to the safety of minor amounts of caffeine, but decreasing fertility with significantly higher doses. Certainly four cups per day of coffee would be too much. We do encourage people to consider limiting themselves to one per day, with decaffeinated drinks to follow.

Of all lifestyle changes, quitting smoking is, by far, the most helpful choice, well beyond any of the supplements that follow. The relationship of alcohol to egg quality is somewhat controversial. Certainly 4 drinks per day is too much. We are not certain if there is a minimum “safe” amount. Fertility can be stressful; if you find yourself tempted by drink too often, please ask for help. There is a controversial association between egg quality and elevated BMI. If your body mass index is over 30, try 5% weight loss, an achievable goal for many, with a potential upside for your eggs.

Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine

We are not able to differentiate the “best” practitioners of acupuncture. We do not know who has good quality control mechanisms in place, best practices for minimizing cross contamination, or who provides the most efficacious treatments. However, we have had the opportunity to meet with a number of practitioners in the field, all with a special interest in fertility. For those who are interested in trying, I am most supportive of a trial of acupuncture +/- TCM. I would suggest a minimum of 2 months. By six months you should see pregnancy if acupuncture is going to be successful.

Supplements

Supplements should be taken for a minimum of two months; you will find if they are going to work, pregnancy should happen quickly. Six months will be trial enough. Though we remain hopeful that in taking these supplements you will be maximizing egg quality, please be aware that none have been proven in scientific randomized controlled trials to be effective.

The supplements we suggest include:

- CoEnzyme Q10
- Myo inositol (especially if PCOS)
- Melatonin at bedtime unless you are taking thyroid medications
- Omega 3 fatty acid
- Vitamin C and E (antioxidants)
- L’arginine

In our opinion, CoEnzyme Q10 is the most important of the supplements. If you are only going to take one, take this one. Dosing, and the “best” supplements for a patient, are individualized at the clinic.