

MEDIA RELEASE

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Infertility – not just a female problem

Men are often shocked to discover that difficulties in having a baby can be due to reproductive problems on the male side.

Problems with the number or quality of sperm produced stop many couples from becoming pregnant.

“Infertility is thought to affect about one in six couples, but for 20 per cent of these couples the problem is with the male partner,” Andrology Australia Professor Rob McLachlan said.

Professor McLachlan said there were many lifestyle behaviours could influence male fertility, and making a few changes could improve sperm counts over time.

“It’s best to talk to your doctor about what could be going wrong as things like sexually transmitted infections can cause fertility problems,” he said.

“Also, it is generally recommended that men avoid spas, saunas and hot baths if trying to father a child.”

He said exposure to drugs and certain chemicals could also affect the quality and quantity of sperm produced.

“And smoking has been linked to birth defects – so stop smoking now if you are trying for a baby.”

Professor McLachlan said coping with male infertility could be very difficult.

“Men can become stressed, frustrated and feel that it is very unfair,” he said.

However, many men with fertility problems can become the fathers of healthy children. Some men receive treatment and then conceive naturally. Others use assisted reproductive technologies, donor sperm, adoption or foster parenting.

“Men with fertility problems can then be referred to specialists, including endocrinologists, urologists, fertility specialists and psychologists,” Professor McLachlan said.

For more information on male infertility and other male reproductive health topics, visit www.andrologyaustralia.org.

Andrology Australia (The Australian Centre of Excellence in Male Reproductive Health) is the peak Australian authority on male reproductive health and associated conditions. It is an initiative funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing and is administered by Monash University.

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