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# 'Weight loss can be key to getting pregnant'

Even a 5 per cent weight reduction can help, say experts



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The World Health Organisation predicts that there will be over 2.3 billion overweight and 700 million obese individuals by the end of 2016. The UAE in particular has a very high rate of obese people, according to a study by the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. It says more than 66 per cent of men and 60 per cent of women in the UAE are overweight or obese.

More importantly, apart from the health consequences associated with it, obesity has been found to impact women's fertility too.

In fact, for women struggling with obesity and infertility, losing as little as 5 per cent of their body weight can dramatically improve their chances of pregnancy, according to the Human Reprod study, led by A.M. Clark from the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology of the University of Adelaide in Australia.

Evidence proves that extra body weight affects a woman's ovulation and decreases her chances of getting pregnant. Although bringing your weight down to the healthy range is ideal for your fertility and the baby's health, the study showed that a small step of 5 per cent weight reduction can assist in achieving pregnancy.

Participants in the study underwent a six month programme of behavioural and lifestyle change, with regular physical activity and having a balanced diet. The women lost an average of 6.3 kg, with 12 of the 13 subjects resuming ovulation and 11 of them becoming pregnant. This also brought about an improvement in the subjects' fitness, diet and self-esteem.

Researchers concluded that weight loss, with its subsequent improvements in ovulation, fitness and psychometric measurements, is a viable first-line treatment option for obese women suffering from infertility.

'Obese women are three times more likely to suffer infertility than women with a normal body mass index, especially because obesity causes hormonal imbalances and problems with ovulation,' says Dr. Patrick Noel, Laparoscopic and Bariatric Surgeon for The American Surgecenter in Abu Dhabi.

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