

Could a simple pill costing 30p a day be the answer to getting pregnant?

By [Scottie Redford](#)

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Alamy

Pregnant: The new pill helped 60 per cent of women conceive

A 30p multi-vitamin pill could more than double a woman's chance of having a baby, according to a study. It found that 60 per cent of those taking the supplements while undergoing IVF became pregnant compared to just a quarter who did not take them. Researchers say the pills contain nutrients that may boost fertility such as vitamins A, C and E, zinc and selenium, that are often absent from our diets. The study carried out at University College London involved 56 women aged 18 to 40, who had all tried unsuccessfully to fall pregnant using IVF for at least a year. Half were given a multi-nutrient pill to take every day and the other half given folic acid pills to take daily. The micronutrient pill also contained folic acid which prevents birth defects and has also been shown to help boost fertility. The team found that 60 per cent of women taking the multi-nutrients fell pregnant, and did not miscarry in the first three months when it is most common. This compared to 25 per cent of women in the group taking folic acid who were still pregnant after three months. The study published in the journal Reproductive Biomedicine also found that women taking the micronutrients needed far fewer attempts to become pregnant. Of those who fell pregnant, 75 per cent conceived in the first course of IVF. By comparison just 18 per cent of those on folic acid who became pregnant did so after the first IVF course.



Getty Images

The study carried out at University College London, pictured, involved 56 women aged 18 to 40, who had all tried unsuccessfully to fall pregnant using IVF

The particular pill, Vitabiotics PregnaCare-Conception, contains folic acid, vitamin B, vitamin E, vitamin A, vitamin C, zinc, selenium and some antioxidants. It costs just over £10 over the counter for a month's supply. Lead researcher Dr Rina Agrawal said: "The implications of this study are far reaching as they suggest that prenatal micronutrient supplementation in women undergoing ovulation induction improve pregnancy rates.



Vitabiotics PregnaCare-Conception, contains folic acid, vitamin B, vitamin E, vitamin A, vitamin C, zinc, selenium and some antioxidants

"There is a large body of evidence establishing the relationship between placental development, foetal growth, pregnancy outcomes and adequate nutrition, particularly vitamin intake." But other scientists pointed out that the study was very small so the results should not be taken too seriously. Dr Alan Pacey who specialises in fertility at the University of Sheffield said: "The influence of nutrition on our fertility is of general interest to the public and professionals, but there are relatively few studies which have examined this systematically and few which have shown direct benefits of taking supplements to enhance things." "Therefore, on the face of it, this study is interesting but we should acknowledge that this is a relatively small number of patients and the study would need to be repeated in a larger trial before we could be certain of the results." A woman's fertility is known to be affected by a number of factors including her age, weight, alcohol consumption, whether she smokes. High levels of stress and even drinking too much coffee have also been shown to reduce the chances of falling pregnant.

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Well, Mebody, all the years I was infertile and unable to have my precious baby and working full time I think I was perhaps paying for everybody else's maternity care and everybody else's children to have an education etc. It is called a civilised society where we help each other achieve our goals in life. I don't expect you to pay for me or my child. I think all of the tax that I have paid over the years - approx £100K not including my husband's, nor my parent's, nor my husband's parent's tax (yes grandparents are affected too by infertility) more than happily pays for my child and probably yours too. Did any one ask me whether I wanted to pay for every body else's children or everybody else's NHS priorities and not have anything in return? Were you means tested by the government before you conceived? If you had had to pay out £22 before you even conceived would you be able to afford your one child? What would be your opinion then?

-Happell, Stanley Kent, 04/12/2011 17:40

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Mebody, The West County 16.42 Then you are very lucky being able to conceive naturally for a lot of women this is not the case I wonder what your attitude would have been if you had not conceived naturally?

-yodaflame, britain, 04/12/2011 17:15

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Hopeful, Swanley, Kent, 04/12/2011 13:05 I have one child, conceived naturally, because that is what I can afford. I hardly think it is a stupid question and yes, those of you who rely on IVF should be means tested if you think the rest of us are going to pay for your children

-Melody, The West Country, UK, 04/12/2011 16:42

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What a stupid comment about having to be able to afford IVF to be able to afford to bring up a child. Stupid - do you people never think? How many people who conceive naturally pay thousands of pounds to someone (as it was £14K) before the child is even conceived? Perhaps if they did there would be less kids born to people who really can't afford it. Perhaps there should be a rule for all methods of conception. Pay IVF to the government as a test of affordability or have your tubes tied. Most people are able to put that money in the bank for the bringing up of the child. The infertile who want children have to scrimp and save not having anything new or luxury for perhaps 10 years (like us) before the child is even born. Plus once you have that much loved and waited for child you try and be with them as much as possible so the chances of being able to afford IVF twice is minimal. People who conceive naturally have 2.3 or 4 kids without the cost of IVF on top.

-Hopeful, Swanley, Kent, 04/12/2011 13:05

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Don't have kids, coz if u touch them or play n they get the brisest bruise social services will take it away

-Trevor, UK, 04/12/2011 08:56

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Sorry, but we need population control not this.

-Warick, Banbury, 04/12/2011 00:24

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Wk! Up norf, 21/2/2011 14:07 If you can't afford IVF then how are you and your husband going to be able to afford to bring up a child.

-Melody, The West Country, UK, 03/12/2011 23:29

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Proud and happy to be 8 weeks with IV via NHS. Couldn't be happier

-LadyGeek, Bridgend, SW, UK, 03/12/2011 22:59

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Michelle A, Lichfield, 02/12/2011 09:09 Just so you know, animal vitamin A is extremely dangerous, such as liverpoate but plant vitamin A is ok, such as you find in sweet potatoes! X - rev, Birmingham, UK, 21/2/2011 11:22 Which of the four different plant vitamin A's is best?

-Wats up, Doc?, Kent, 03/12/2011 18:32

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My sister is 8 weeks pregnant with the baby she is carrying for me and my husband who are both 38. We are truly excited and grateful for this miracle. Is there a problem with that? Or is the country to 'over populated'?

-Esmee, London, 03/12/2011 15:41

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