



Introducing a Clinical Nutrition Referral Service to Cork Fertility Centre

Why has Cork Fertility Centre decided to partner with Cork Nutrition?

Cork Nutrition Consultancy, founded in 1999, is lead by consultant dietitian/clinical nutritionist Niamh O'Connor. Niamh is an honours graduate of Trinity College Dublin, is a member of the Irish Nutrition & Dietetic institute, and has over 19 years experience. As a member of INDI, Niamh works under a strict Code of Ethics & Best Practice, and has Full Professional Indemnity Insurance. Niamh's practice is the only fulltime freelance nutrition clinic in Cork which is run by a **qualified** dietitian / clinical nutritionist. Check out Niamh's full biography and experience by logging onto her website : <http://corknutrition.ie/about/>

Planning a Baby: Nutrition Tips for Women

A healthy, well balanced diet is essential when planning a baby. Making a few simple changes well in advance of undertaking fertility treatment or becoming pregnant will help your body prepare for pregnancy along with optimising your baby's development when conceived.

Some changes that can help are:

- Achieve and maintain a healthy weight
- Take a 400microgram **Folic Acid** supplement every day
- Eat more iron-rich foods
- Eat at least three servings of dairy foods daily
- Cut down or cut out alcohol
- Quit smoking

Check out the free fact sheet by the Irish Nutrition & Dietetic Institute: <http://bit.ly/Tf9V23>

Planning a Baby: Nutrition Tips for Men

When it comes to conceiving a baby, diet and lifestyle are just as important for men as for women. Infertility affects one of six couples during their reproductive years; one-third of these cases are related to the male partner. Some common causes of sperm-related infertility are low sperm count, slow moving sperm, abnormal shape and size of sperm and problems with semen. **Diet and lifestyle choices can affect the health of a man's sperm.** Too much or too little of certain vitamins and minerals can affect sperm. For example, a lack of **Vitamin C and Zinc** may cause sperm to clump together. Men should get 90 milligrams of vitamin C a day. Sources of vitamin C include citrus fruits and vegetables. Men should aim for 11 milligrams of zinc a day. Zinc is abundant in oysters, crab, ready-to-eat fortified breakfast cereals, red meat, poultry, beans and cashew nuts. Further information can found be on these links:

General nutrition & male fertility <http://bit.ly/e3yDv8>

Dietary fat and male fertility (new research) <http://bit.ly/PQbbcB>

How important is Nutrition as an adjunct to fertility treatment?

Nutrition is the cornerstone of good health and wellbeing. It is particularly crucial at certain stages of life including fertility, conception, pregnancy, brain development, childhood growth, and has a significant role to play in the prevention and treatment of chronic diseases. The specific types of nutrition consultations relevant to fertility are outlined briefly here:

- **General Nutrition** and dietetic review to check overall nutritional adequacy of the diet (single once-off consultation)
- **Coeliac Disease** is an autoimmune disease caused by intolerance to Gluten. Gluten is a protein found in wheat, oats, rye, barley, malt and any food containing these. The incidence of Coeliac Disease in Ireland has trebled in recent years and now affects 1 in 100 people. Undiagnosed Coeliac Disease can sometimes lead to impaired fertility in women. Adults with undiagnosed Coeliac Disease may have few if any symptoms, or may often self-diagnose their gastro-intestinal symptoms as just irritable bowel syndrome. Women with impaired fertility should consider having a blood test carried out to diagnose or rule out Coeliac Disease; this should be arranged with their GP. It is important not to consume gluten-free or wheat free products for 4-5 weeks before any such investigative blood test as a 'false negative' result may occur. The gold standard or most accurate method of diagnosing Coeliac Disease is a small bowel biopsy, but if the Coeliac blood test is positive, a biopsy is not necessary to further confirm this. It is also crucial to avoid the temptation of embarking on a "DIY gluten free diet". This diet, whilst it may ameliorate the symptoms, it will still contain considerable amounts residual amounts of gluten which will be relevant at gut mucosal level, and some of the lesser known symptoms such as infertility may persist.

Further information can be found here: http://www.coeliac.ie/coeliac_disease

- **Weight management, Fertility & Pregnancy**

Overweight, underweight & eating disorders:

Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight in the pre-conception stage is very important. A healthy weight means a BMI of 20-25kg/M², calculated with a simple formula using accurately measured weight and height data. To some extent it is a crude measurement and has many limitations. BMI alone is not an accurate predictor of overall health and wellbeing, as body shape and body composition are also hugely relevant. However, being underweight or overweight may adversely affect fertility. Being overweight may also increase your risk of other problems during pregnancy, such as high blood pressure, and may lead to complications at delivery.

Successful fertility treatment and subsequent pregnancy can be a very stressful time for women who have a history of or continue to suffer from an eating disorder, particularly in view of the changes in body weight and shape. Support from a qualified dietitian is crucial here also, to ensure optimal health and wellbeing for mum and optimal delivery of vital nutrients for baby's growth and development during this time.

- **PCOS (Poly Cystic Ovarian Syndrome)**

PCOS is a common cause of fertility problems in women and, if not properly managed, can lead to additional health problems such as diabetes in later life. Dietary and lifestyle management have been shown to improve symptoms, and weight management is advocated as the primary therapy in overweight women with PCOS. Women with PCOS may have an oral glucose tolerance test (OGTT) carried out to determine whether or not impaired glucose tolerance or insulin resistance has developed (this test can be discussed with your G.P.). If impaired glucose tolerance or insulin resistance is found, a consultation with a qualified dietitian/clinical nutritionist is recommended where a meal plan can be designed for you. This may take the form of a low GI diet or a 'diabetic'-type diet low in refined carbohydrates where carbohydrate foods are distributed evening throughout the eating occasions of the day.

- **Sperm DNA fragmentation**

Cork Fertility Centre is currently conducting a research study examining DNA damage in sperm and its correlation with Intrauterine Insemination (IUI) outcomes. The results of this study will help determine if these tests of sperm DNA damage are useful in deciding the best treatment options for future couples. Although it is likely that nutrition has a role to play here too, there is currently no conclusive scientific evidence on the benefit of dietary supplementation. Certain vitamins, minerals and amino-acids may improve sperm count or sperm quality. They include: Zinc, Selenium, Vitamin E, Vitamin B12, Folic acid, L-carnitine, Vitamin C & Beta-carotene. You will need to check with your Fertility team and Doctor before taking any herbal remedies or supplements, as some can cause harm when taken in high doses or for extended periods of time. Some may also adversely interact with certain medication.

- **Food allergy and intolerance testing**

There are a huge number of inaccurate "food allergy & intolerance tests" being offered to members of the public on a daily basis. In the vast majority of cases there is little or no scientific basis to such tests. Any improvement you may feel as a result of any such diagnosis or subsequent restrictive diet is at best chance, or may even be the 'placebo effect'. If you feel unwell and have genuine symptoms of what you think may be an adverse reaction to one or more foods, you should always seek the advice of your family doctor first. This is particularly true if you have gastrointestinal symptoms (such as altered bowel habit, diarrhoea, constipation, pain, cramps, bloating, nausea or rectal bleeding) as these symptoms may be passed off by an alternative practitioner as 'an intolerance', but may in fact be something far more serious which needs to be investigated thoroughly by a qualified medical doctor. If a true food allergy is suspected, especially in infants and young children, appropriate validated medical tests can be carried out, with referral to appropriate consultants if necessary (such as a paediatrician, dermatologist or immunologist). In the meantime there is an excellent leaflet produced by the British Dietetic Association which can be found at this link:

<http://www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/AllergyTesting.pdf>

Where is Niamh O'Connor's private nutrition clinic located?

Cork Nutrition is based in Suite no. 1, Touchstone Primary Care Team, 2nd floor, Blackrock Hall Primary Care Centre, off Skehard Rd., Blackrock, Cork.

Phone 021 – 4231 166 for an appointment.

Check out www.corknutrition.ie for further details, map & directions.

How much does it cost for a consultation?

The initial consultation costs €90 (approx 1 hour, but may be longer). Follow-up reviews are €50 (approx 30 mins). Joint consultations (2 people) cost €150 (approx 1½ hours). A weight management programme comprising 7 consultations is at a reduced rate of €340 (which is ~€48 per consultation).

<http://corknutrition.ie/private-services/fee-structure/>

Are the fees covered by private health insurance and/or tax relief/Med1 form?

Yes. Niamh O'Connor (Cork Nutrition Consultancy) is registered with the Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute and all major health insurers (VHI, Quinn/Laya, Aviva & GloHealth). Up to €45 per visit can be claimed back from your insurance. The remaining portion of the consultation fees can then also be submitted to revenue for tax relief at the lower rate using the Med 1 form.

Full details of fee structure & up-to-date information regarding reimbursement amounts from all private health insurers can be found on Niamh's website:

<http://corknutrition.ie/private-services/fee-structure/>

The Med 1 form can also be downloaded: <http://www.revenue.ie/en/tax/it/claim-forms.html>

NOTE: If you attend a 'nutritionist' who is not qualified or a nutritional therapist, and they don't have the initials MINDI after their name, you cannot claim any portion of the fees through your private health insurer or submit the receipts to Revenue for tax back (Med 1 form).

The only credentials that you should rely on if you are attending someone who is claiming to 'qualified in nutrition' are

- RD (registered dietitian / clinical nutritionist)
- MINDI (member of Irish Nutrition & Dietetic Institute)

Additional Service: Nutritional analysis of your diet or food diary, using validated software & accurate quantification methodologies is also available at Cork Nutrition, with our **NutriCount™** Service.

