

Pesticides May Decrease Male Fertility

On-the-job exposure to pesticides may reduce sperm quality, according to results of a study conducted in couples seeking in vitro fertilization (IVF) therapy. Fertilization rates were significantly decreased for couples with paternal pesticide exposure.

Despite public concern over the effects of pesticides and other chemicals on reproductive health, data on these issues remains sparse and limited, according to the researchers. Sperm from men with either high or moderate on-the-job exposure to pesticides was associated with a 78% and 48% decline in IVF success rates, respectively, compared with sperm from unexposed men.

Overall, the authors identified 16 couples in which male partners were exposed to moderate or high levels of pesticides at the workplace. Occupations with high pesticide use included fruit or flower harvesting, contracting, livestock, poultry or dairy farming, and gardening.

The authors stress that because most individuals were exposed to multiple pesticides with various active ingredients, it is impossible to draw conclusions as to which chemical may be responsible for the observed effect. They add that exposure to other workplace contaminants, such as organic solvents, metal dust/fumes, or welding fumes had no significant effect on male infertility.

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Dr. Mercola's Comment:

One powerful argument to eat organically. Pesticides are exceptionally powerful hormone mimics that can have devastating consequences on our exceptionally delicate reproductive processes. Yes, organic food is more expensive, but can one put a price on the ability to successfully reproduce? It was interesting to note that other toxic insults, such as heavy metals and organic solvents did not produce fertility impairment.

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