CBD Oil and Fertility: Do You Have All the Facts?

Infertility problems are surprisingly common. In fact, the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that at least 10 percent of the female population (ages 15-44) have difficulty getting or staying pregnant. This means more than 6.1 million women alone face fertility issues.

Unfortunately, women are not the only ones who may experience infertility problems. This issue affects both men and women equally. Among couples experiencing infertility, roughly 35 percent is due to the male, while another 35 percent is due to the female. Another 20 percent is a combination of both male and female factors, and the remaining 10 percent is unknown.

Thankfully, a number of alternative therapies are on the rise for helping with infertility problems. One of the most popular alternative therapies is CBD. This amazing cannabinoid has profound effects on fertility, more of which will be shared below.
What is CBD and How does it Work?
First things first: let’s go over what exactly CBD is and how it works.

Cannabidiol, or CBD, is one of two main cannabinoids found in hemp and cannabis plants. (The other, of course, being THC.) These cannabinoids work within the body to help maintain a large regulatory system called the endocannabinoid system, or ECS for short. This system is comprised of a multitude of receptors located all throughout the body.

CBD and THC primarily work with two receptors: CB1 and CB2, though they interact with many others. These receptors either can be activated by the body’s naturally occurring cannabinoids, or by cannabinoids such as CBD and THC. However, while THC actually binds to these receptors to activate them, CBD simply stimulates the body’s naturally occurring cannabinoids to activate the receptors, causing them to do more of what they normally do.

Because CBD does not directly bind to these receptors, it does not produce any psychological effects. Initial studies have found that CBD offers a multitude of medicinal benefits, including:

- Antiemetic (reduces nausea and vomiting)
- Anti-inflammatory
- Antioxidant
- Antipsychotic
- Anticonvulsant (suppresses seizure activity)
- Anti-tumoral/anti-cancer
- Antidepressant
- Anxiolytic (combats anxiety)
- Analgesic (relieves pain)

What is CBD’s Effect on Fertility?
Increasing evidence has shown CBD has a powerful effect on fertility. This is due to the way it interacts with the ECS. Since the ECS is a regulatory system, its primary function is helping maintain homeostasis, or balance, in the body. When CBD is introduced, the ECS system can be brought back to balance and be encouraged to work more smoothly and efficiently.
CBD’s Effect on Female Fertility

This powerful cannabinoid affects women and men in different ways. For women, CBD can be beneficial for getting pregnant as well as helping throughout pregnancy and delivery as well. Many women also are turning toward CBD because of its ability to mitigate THC’s effects.

For women trying to get pregnant, promising evidence has shown CBD can help with conceiving. While studies have shown THC may affect implantation, ovulation, and even be linked to miscarriages, CBD has shown the opposite effects. In addition, because CBD has powerful analgesic and anti-inflammatory properties, many women opt for CBD during uncomfortable periods of pregnancy and delivery.

A study conducted by the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the National University of Ireland Galway, and published in the January 2010 issue of the Journal of the Society for Reproduction and Fertility, found CBD also may be incredibly effective for reducing uterine contractions during labour and delivery. This is because CBD may act as an antagonist for oxytocin, which is what causes these contractions. This means CBD can help to ease the delivery process naturally.

CBD’s Effect on Male Fertility

Research conducted by Dr. Hans Hatt at Ruhr University in Bochum, Germany has found an incredible link between CBD and male fertility. This study found that a receptor previously presumed to be a part of the ECS also is present in sperm cells. This receptor, called the GPR18 receptor, now can link cannabinoids and the ECS directly to fertility.

However, the evidence concerning THC and CBD is incredibly different. Studies have shown THC may impact testosterone levels, stunt sperm maturation, and increase the number of abnormal sperm cells, as well as decreasing overall sperm count and mobility. On the other hand, the evidence for CBD is much more promising.

Evidence suggests CBD may play a key role in an essential biological process for procreation called the acrosome reaction. This study found that when the GPR18

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receptor in sperm cells is activated, this acrosome reaction is triggered. During this process, the sperm cell is altered slightly as it moves toward the egg. As the sperm ‘swims’ toward the egg, digestive enzymes are released and the sperm loses the protective ‘cap’ on its head. This allows the sperm to effectively penetrate the egg. So, without this receptor and the ECS as a whole, this reaction would not occur and fertilization would be impossible.

If these findings are correct, CBD could be the next breakthrough in helping resolve infertility issues. More research is needed to prove CBD’s powerful effects on both female and male fertility, though the evidence is incredibly compelling thus far.

→ For more information about the endocannabinoid system’s role in fertility, click here.

Conclusion

As the evidence continues growing, CBD’s incredible medical and therapeutic potential slowly is being revealed. By working directly with the body, CBD is able to help bring the body back to homeostasis. This effectively allows CBD to work to heal the body from the inside out.

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Sources:
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