

No link found between low sperm count, birth defects

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Image: U.S. National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences

Study looked at men with fertility issues, babies they fathered with assisted reproductive technology.

(HealthDay)—Having a low sperm count doesn't seem to determine whether a man's children will be born with birth defects, a new study indicates.

With [infertile couples](#), men are partially or fully responsible for the inability to conceive about 40 percent of the time. Assisted reproductive technologies such as in vitro fertilization can help couples have children, but research has suggested a possible link between these approaches—when used to treat infertility problems in the male partner—and a higher risk of birth defects.

In the new study, researchers examined a Baylor College of Medicine database in search of possible connections between birth defects and [low sperm count](#). The researchers didn't find any links.

"For couples considering assisted [reproductive technology](#), the results of this study show they should not be concerned about decreased semen quality and [birth defects](#)," Dr. Tobias Kohler, residency program director at Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, said in a news release from the American Urological Association. "More than 5 million happy and healthy babies have been conceived using these techniques."

The findings are scheduled for presentation Sunday at the American Urological Association annual meeting in Orlando, Fla. Kohler will moderate a session about these findings.

Research presented at medical meetings should be viewed as preliminary until published in a peer-reviewed journal.

More information: For more about infertility, visit the [U.S. National Library of Medicine](#).

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