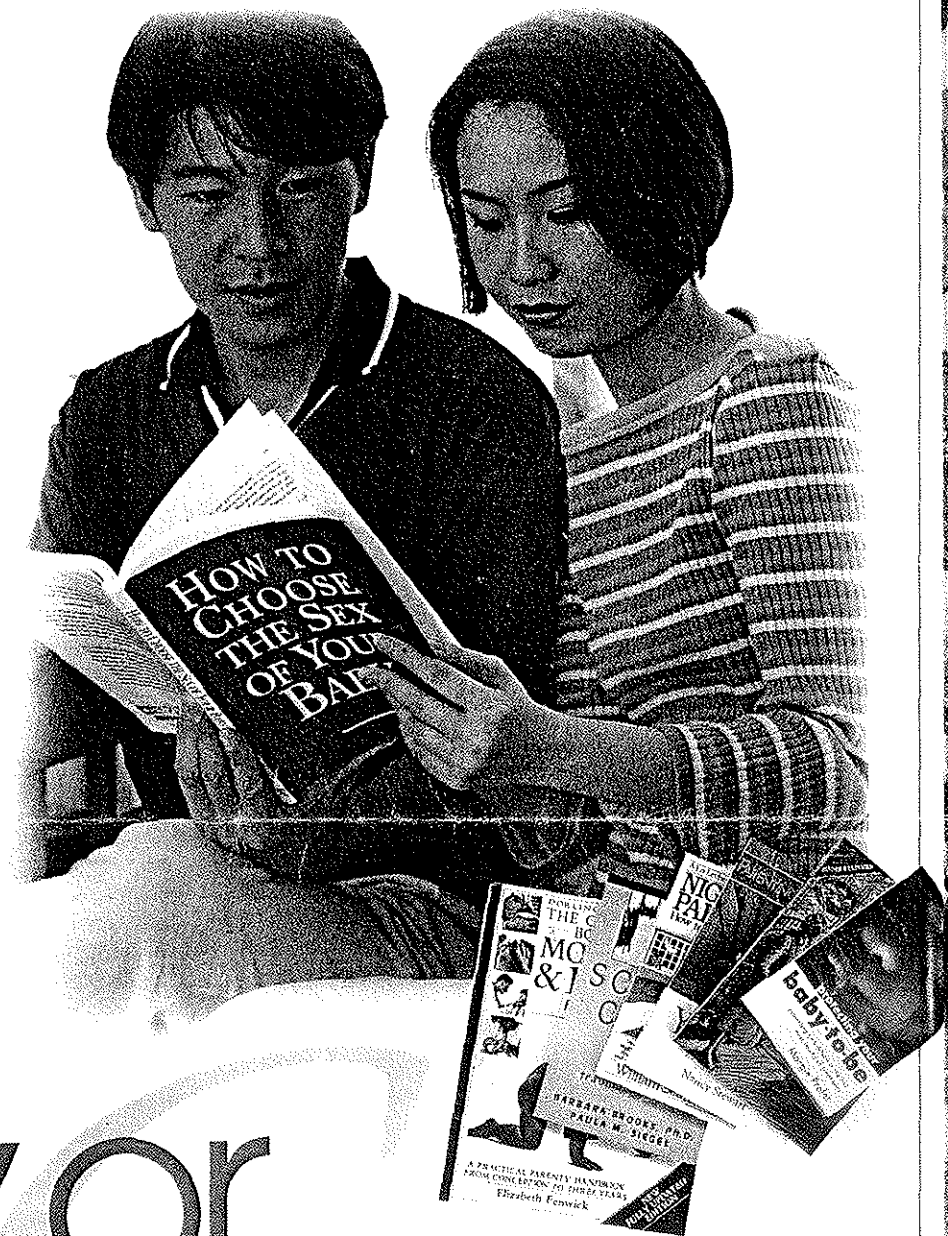


## READY TO BE A MUM?

**A**ccording to Dr Shettles, one of the pioneers of sex selection in this century, if you try it using his methods, you have a 75% chance! The Chinese follow a conception calendar that was created by a Chinese scientist 700 years ago and it claims to have 99% accuracy! Some people follow a diet plan that is believed to promote the development of the sex you want your baby to be. Which brings us to the question, is it actually morally right to choose the sex of your baby? Shouldn't we all be contented with whatever baby we get? After all, as thousands of childless couples go through the agony of having a baby artificially and spending enormous amounts of money to get even just one, why be choosy about our baby's sex? Shouldn't we be thankful if we are able to have one at all?

### Sex Selection – Right Or Wrong?

Moral and religious debates go on about whether parents should choose the sex of their child. Various studies have emerged arguing for the validity of sex selection. Some studies show that couples who go for sex selection



# Boy or girl?

## Can You Choose The Sex Of Your Baby?

*If you need to know whether you can really have a child of the sex you want, here's an update on some methods of sex selection that have gained numerous supporters from all over the world*

raise happier, more well-adjusted children because these children were definitely wanted.

You must surely have heard stories of children growing up feeling that their parents didn't love them as much because they were not of the sex their parents wanted them to be. What about stories of girls who eventually turned into tomboys because they tried to act like boys, as what their parents really wanted was a boy? They tried to act more masculine

and by Dr Ronald R. Rindfuss of the University of Wisconsin's Center for Demography and Ecology. The study revealed in surveys done on six thousand married women that an imbalance will occur only in the first two years when the women wanted a son for their eldest child but after the second year, these women usually wanted girls for second babies, thereby, restoring the balance of sexes in the population.

swim faster but live a shorter time than X sperms, the sperms responsible for producing baby girls. On the other hand, X sperms swim slower but live longer than Y sperms. So, when a couple has intercourse at the time of ovulation when the egg is released, the Y sperm, being the faster swimmer, will reach the egg first, thereby producing a male child. If the couple have intercourse two days before ovulation, then at the time of

## Sex selection should be confined to couples who are determined to start a family, determined to have children but are sure that they will still love and embrace their children wholeheartedly, even if they were not of the sex they initially desired.

in their strong and secret desire to please their parents.

In China, where the government imposes a 'one-child' policy, and there is a preference for boys, there is an appalling rate of female infanticide. Sex selection devotees advocate sex selection methods, apart from education in birth control, in countries like these, to at least bring down the rates of infant girl killings.

According to Dr Shettles' book, the church authorities have no objection to pre-natal selection methods. They are against the post-selection methods - for eg, when the baby is already present and abortion is performed on it because of its undesired sex.

### Imbalance Of Sexes

There are concerns about sex selection creating an imbalance in the proportion of sexes in the population. However, although most studies show that families usually want a boy for their firstborn, they also show that most families want a girl for their second child.

The most definitive study on this so far was the one carried out in the US by Dr Charles F. Westoff of Princeton University's Office of Population Research

### Are You Suited For Sex Selection?

Dr Shettles' method only has a 75% success rate. The Chinese method boasts almost 100% accuracy but there is still a one percent margin for error. What if after following the method meticulously, you still end up with a baby of the sex you don't want? "You must be prepared to accept the baby wholeheartedly," advises Dr Shettle. He reminds couples going for sex selection to be open to this possibility. He is also very much against parents who scan for the sex of their baby and have it aborted once they find out it was not of the sex they wanted.

Sex selection should be confined to couples who are determined to start a family, determined to have children but are sure that they will still love and embrace their children wholeheartedly, even if they were not of the sex they initially desired.

### The Dr Shettle's Method

One of the very few methods that is actually supported by scientific data, Dr Shettles' method is based on the premise that during intercourse, when the man ejaculates sperm, Y sperms that are responsible for creating male babies

actual ovulation when the egg is released, all the Y sperms will have died, leaving the hardier X sperms alone to meet the egg, thereby producing a female child. He suggests further that the conditions in the vaginal environment also determine the outcome. An alkaline environment in the vagina maximises the survival of the Y sperms whereas an acidic environment kills Y sperms. On the other hand, X sperms can survive in an acidic environment.

### DETERMINING OVULATION The Cervical Mucus Method

Based on the premises mentioned earlier, the primary concern is to determine the time of ovulation. This, plus the other techniques which will be mentioned later, can help to attempt for babies of either sex.

At the start of the menstrual cycle, the mucus is scanty and somewhat thick and cloudy when it appears in the vaginal opening. As the cycle approaches ovulation, more estrogen is produced by the ovaries and this makes the mucus usually more profuse (but not always), makes it transparent and watery, changing it from a cloudy to a clear mucus. At the height of ovulation, it should look

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like an uncooked egg white, at its thinnest, with maximum elasticity (stretching easily) with a gelatinous, slippery feel. The mucus changes again following peak of ovulation to a scanty, thicker, and cloudy type.

It is advisable to practise looking at your cervical mucus secretions for at least three months to be skillful in seeing exactly when your peak ovulation days are. This, combined with the BBT method, will give a better estimate on when ovulation occurs.

### The BBT Method

Combined with monitoring one's cervical mucus, taking your Basal Body Temperature (BBT) is another way to determine ovulation, and the two combined will give a reliable indicator of when one is ovulating. To take the BBT:

1. Take your body temperature first thing in the morning, before you get out of bed. Make sure you have not taken anything like a drink or cigarette or engaged in any activity, eg, sex, as this alters the body's temperature.

2. Record your temperature in a chart for the whole month. You must practise taking and recording your temperature for three months before you try to conceive, so that you get a fairly accurate picture of exactly when you are ovulating. Combined with your observations of your mucus secretions, you can determine when you are ovulating more accurately.

3. At the time of ovulation when an egg is released, the temperature drops slightly and then rises over the next two days by no more than 0.5° Centigrade or 1° Fahrenheit. The tempera-

ture remains at this high level until the onset of the next period. The most important thing to watch out for is the sudden upward shift, which is the time of ovulation.

### The Chinese Calendar Method

The Chinese method is popular among the Chinese in Singapore. It is based on a chart that is passed around in photocopies among friends and relatives. As noted on the chart itself, a Chinese scientist discovered and drew copies of this chart, which was buried in a royal tomb near Peking, China 700 years ago. The original copy is said to be kept in the Institute of Science in Peking. The chart claims that its accuracy has been proven by thousands of people and is 99% accurate.

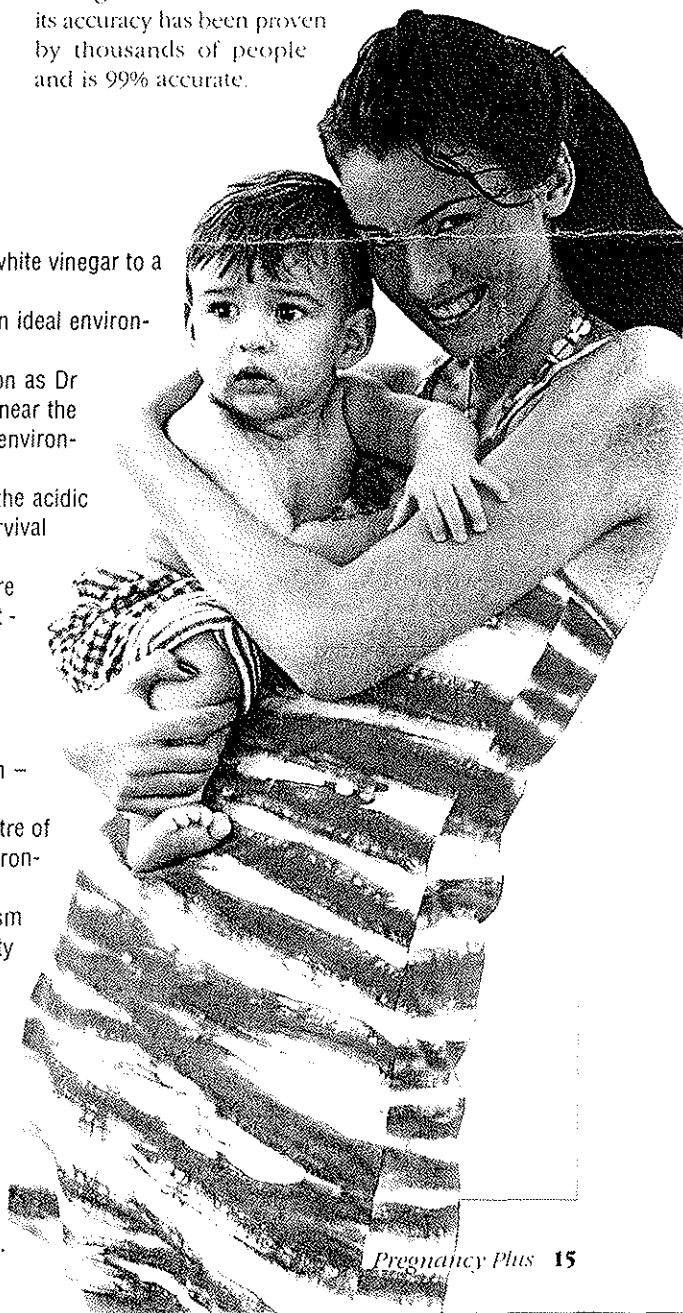
## To Try For A Girl

1. Intercourse should be done until two to three days before ovulation.
2. Before intercourse, use an acid douche, consisting of two tablespoons of white vinegar to a litre of water since an acid environment kills the Y male sperms.
3. Avoid orgasm during intercourse as these increases alkaline secretions, an ideal environment for the Y sperms.
4. Intercourse should be performed in the face to face or missionary position as Dr Shettles believes that this makes it unlikely for the sperm to be deposited near the cervix (neck of the womb), a place where the sperm can escape the acid environment of the vagina.
5. Shallow penetration should be done as again, this exposes the sperm to the acidic environment of the vagina, thereby killing the Y sperm and ensuring the survival of the X sperm.
6. No abstinence from intercourse is necessary until two to three days before ovulation. With more frequent intercourse, there will be a lower sperm count - and this favours female sperm.

## To Try For A Boy

1. Intercourse should be timed as close as possible to the time of ovulation - preferably on the day itself, within 12 hours.
2. Use a baking soda douche by mixing two tablespoons of baking soda in a litre of water. Wash with this solution before intercourse to make the vaginal environment even more alkaline. Y sperms survive in an alkaline environment.
3. Female orgasm should be most advisable and let the woman have the orgasm first or at the same time as the man. Female orgasm increases the quantity and flow on natural alkaline secretions that arise close to ovulation.
4. Penetration from the rear is the most ideal position as this ensures that the sperm is deposited near the cervix and entrance of the womb, where the secretions are more alkaline, too.
5. Deep penetration is advised as this also ensures that the sperm is deposited near the cervix or entrance of the womb.
6. Prior abstinence is necessary as this helps ensure maximum sperm count, a factor favouring male sperm.

For more in-depth information, refer to the book "How To Choose the Sex of Your Baby" by Dr L.B. Shettles and David Rorvik, available at major bookshops.



# The Chinese Calendar Method

Woman's Conceiving Age

Month / Age	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45
January	0	X	0	X	0	X	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	X	X	0	X	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	X	0
February	X	0	X	0	X	X	0	X	0	X	0	0	0	0	X	0	X	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	0	X
March	0	X	0	0	X	0	X	X	X	0	X	0	0	X	X	X	X	0	X	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	0	X
April	X	0	X	0	0	X	X	0	0	X	0	0	0	0	0	X	0	X	0	X	X	X	X	0	X	0	X	0
May	X	0	X	0	X	X	0	0	0	0	X	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	X	0	X	X	0	X	0	X	0	X
June	X	X	X	0	0	X	X	X	X	0	X	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	X	0	0	X	0	X	0	X	0
July	X	X	X	0	0	X	X	0	X	X	X	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	0
August	X	X	X	0	0	X	0	X	X	X	X	0	0	0	0	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	X	0	X	0
September	X	X	X	0	0	X	0	X	0	X	X	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	X	0	X
October	X	X	0	0	0	X	0	X	0	X	X	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	X	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	0	X
November	X	0	X	0	0	X	0	X	0	0	0	0	X	0	0	0	X	X	X	0	X	0	X	0	X	X	0	X
December	X	0	X	0	0	0	0	X	0	X	0	0	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	0	0	0	0	X	0	X	0	X

X - male, 0 - female

**Note:** This chart is based on the month when the baby is conceived and not based on the birth of the baby.

According to the instructions written, the procedure for choosing is as follows:

1. Choose for yourself whether you want a boy or a girl by following the chart. The woman's age from 18 to 45 (Chinese reckoning) is on the top line while the months January to December indicate the month when the baby is conceived. By following the chart, you will be able to tell whether your baby will be a boy or girl. Thus, you can plan around it.

2. Draw a line from the figure representing the woman's age and a line from the month the baby is conceived and you get your desired sex. For eg, if the woman is 27 years old and her baby is conceived in January (according to the Chinese Lunar calendar), her baby will be a girl.

This method has never been endorsed by any medical expert. It has also never been proven scientifically. However, some locals will swear by its accuracy.

## The Diet Sex Selection Method

The book, "The Pre-Conception Gender Diet" by Sally Langendoen, R.N. and William Proctor is the latest addition to the list of claims that diet can be manipulated to determine the sex of offspring. However, what is

special about this diet is that it appears to have some scientific underpinning. It is based on research by Dr Stolkowski of Paris and Dr Jacques Lorrain of Montreal, reported in the International Journal of Gynaecology and Obstetrics in 1980, where 260 women put on a special boy or girl diet yielded 80 percent success results.

For a girl, one must take foods high in calcium and low in salt and potassium but if you want a boy, a diet high in salt and potassium and low in calcium and magnesium is advised. Husbands are also told to go on the same diet as their wives - mainly to ensure that their wives stay on the diet and to provide psychological support.

Before following instructions from this book, one must first consult the doctor before going

on this diet. Once on it, do continue having check-ups. The reason for this is because the diet recommended is obviously imbalance.

A high-calcium or high-salt diet can potentially cause health complications. People with pre-existing health problems might suffer worse because of these diets. However, the authors concede that compared to the Dr Shettles method, this doesn't take out too much spontaneity out of the sex act. One can argue that because of the health risks involved, this method might just cancel out sex entirely, especially if the subjects are sick. Moreover, this diet method, although possessing some scientific back-up, has yet to be confirmed by numerous independent researchers throughout the world. ■

## Treasure What You Have

Although the three methods promise better-than-average results, it would still do well to remind one's self that sex selection is an option that should be seriously considered. Ask yourself these questions before trying out any method:

- Why do I want a baby of this sex more than the other?
- Why does my partner want this sex, too?
- How would I feel if we are unsuccessful in getting the sex we want?
- How would my partner feel if we are unsuccessful in getting the sex we want?
- Will having the baby of an undesired sex affect our relationship?
- Would we choose to carry on and have this child if we knew it was not the sex we wanted?
- If the baby turns out to be of a sex we don't want, will it affect our hopes and expectations?

It is worth trying to select the sex of a baby if after considering the previous questions, you would still welcome the birth of a baby of a sex you didn't desire. Think about all the childless couples labouring to have just one and consider yourself lucky to have been given a baby at all. After all, there is a saying that goes "Treasure what you have."