

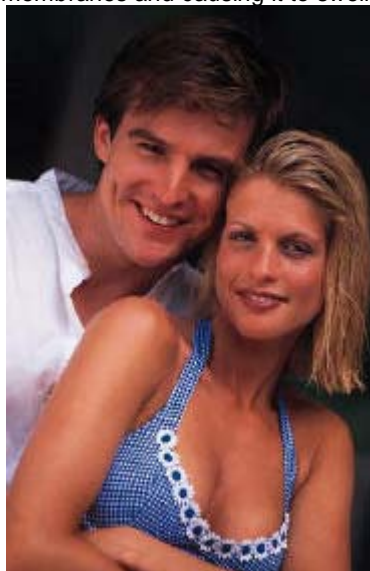




complained of vaginal dryness. "When I started looking at other [personal lubricants] out there, they all damaged sperm, which was consistent with reported studies others had published," she says, and that led her to create a product that would allow couples to have enjoyable sex without worrying about harming sperm.

According to Dr. Ellington, in order for a lubricant not to damage sperm, it needs to have a similar pH and osmolarity, which refers to the amount of ions or salt in a solution. Popular lubricants such as KY Jelly and Astroglide both have pH values much too low and osmolarities that are much too high, which pulls moisture out of the sperm, causing it to die within minutes after contact, she says.

Other popular lubricants such as water or saliva do not have the right levels to be sperm-friendly either. With water, it enters the sperm cell, damaging the membranes and causing it to swell and burst, says Dr. Ellington. Saliva, she says, is really detrimental, as it contains enzymes designed for digestion which cause sperm to wiggle and shake.



What about the oft-cited egg whites? Dr. Morris says that some older studies concluded that egg whites were the lubricant of choice at the time. In fact, in her book [Taking Charge of Your Fertility](#), Toni Weschler says, "Unfortunately, the only product that seems to provide necessary lubrication without harming sperm is *real* eggwhite..."

But if you're like me, the idea of putting egg whites in your body seems more than a little gross. Plus, says Dr. Ellington, there's always the risk of infection, and it does not quite have the right pH and osmolarity levels either.

Pre~Seed also contains a naturally-occurring plant sugar, which according to Dr. Ellington, stabilizes cell function in both vaginal and sperm cells. And, unlike other lubricants, it mixes with the sperm. "We have done a lot of testing on this product," she says. "We saw this really dramatic effect with other products when the sperm is like 'No, we're not going in there.' I think because Pre~Seed is so much like semen, they don't freak out. They swim right in it and through it. The sperm kind of feel at home."

#### Using Pre~Seed

A package of Pre~Seed, which sells for about \$20, contains six pre-filled applicators. It's easy to insert – you simply tear off a tab, insert it in the vagina and squeeze the applicator to release the lubricant.

One nice feature is that you can use the product up to 15 minutes before intercourse. "I like the fact that you can use Pre~Seed prior to making love, so you don't have to stop in the middle of all the fun," says Tabitha, 28, of San Diego, Calif., who has been trying to conceive for nearly two years. "It really helps the spontaneity," says Dr. Ellington.

Users also cite how natural Pre~Seed feels. Melinda, 30, and her husband Michael, 27, have been trying to conceive their second child for about six years. "I have recently gone through two cryosurgeries (freezing of the cervix) ... and it has taken almost all of my cervical fluids away," says Melinda. "It is so natural feeling that my husband said it felt like 'old times' – the way I used to feel before I had my daughter seven years ago."

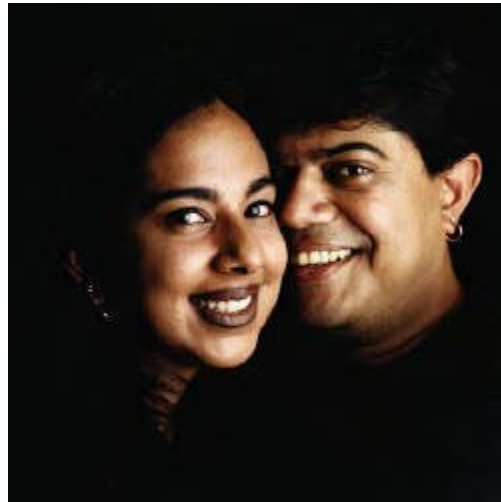
Dr. Ellington also points out that its consistency is very similar to semen, and it is not sticky at all. "It's so easy to use – and it works like a dream," says Stewart. "It creates a nice, slippery environment! Plus, it doesn't stain our sheets, and it has no odor."

One word of warning, however, each applicator contains a seemingly more-than-needed amount of product, so use sparingly! Dr. Ellington says the intention was to include enough product to coat the vagina and the external cervix for everyone. But it is a lot of product, she says, so she advises inserting it while sitting on the toilet. They will be decreasing the amount in future packaging because of such feedback.

#### **Can Pre~Seed Help Me Conceive?**

Bio~OriGyn, the company which manufactures the product, has not done any studies on the number of pregnancies that have resulted from the use of Pre~Seed and doesn't plan to in the near future, so there is no conclusive evidence.

However, Dr. Ellington says they have had several pregnancies reported since women began using the product. Stewart recently conceived after her second month of using the product. Also, a post on the company's online message board says, "My husband and I are thrilled to finally be experiencing what we have wanted for so long. We finally had success on month 19. I truly believe it was the Pre~Seed that made all the difference in the world ... I used it two days before I ovulated and then again on ovulation day, and lo and behold, I got a positive test two weeks later."



How might it help? While the product was not designed to facilitate pregnancy, it was designed to facilitate more enjoyable sex. And it would only make sense that more enjoyable sex would lead to more excited partners and possibly more frequent intercourse, which can only help your chances of conception (unless, of course, you're having sex too much to keep up a high enough sperm count). "When you combine a low or borderline sperm count and poor ejaculate quality due to stress and poor stimulation (often due to lack of lubrication), it can push a couple over the edge to where conception can really become a challenge," says Dr. Ellington.

The company is working on a new product that is designed to facilitate pregnancy. Pro~Cept will contain the same plant sugar, but will undergo clinical testing in studies to look at how it may help sperm to better penetrate cervical mucus.

At the very least, Pre~Seed can bring some joy back into the bedroom, allowing "babymaking" to become less of a chore. Says Stewart, "The fun of making love has returned to us once again."

For more information about Pre~Seed, log on to the company's Web site. You can also purchase the product online at [www.drugstore.com](http://www.drugstore.com).

#### **Want to see more?**

- ⌄ [The Embarrassing Truth: Conception Facts You Need to Know But Are Too Afraid to Ask](#)
- ⌄ [Keeping the Love Alive When You're Trying to Conceive](#)
- ⌄ [Creating Memories: How to Capture the Essence of Your Last Child-free Year](#)
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[Back to the index](#)

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