

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MILLIONS OF CONTESTANTS COMPETE IN A WINNER-TAKE-ALL REALITY SHOW AS NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL PRESENTS *SIZING UP SPERM*

**It's Survival of the Fittest When Human-Sized Sperm
Struggle to Complete an Amazing Race on the Path to Fertilization**

***Sizing Up Sperm* premieres Sunday, March 14, at 9 p.m. ET/PT on NGC**

(WASHINGTON, D.C. — JANUARY 15, 2010) Each of us was the grand prize in an ultimate reality competition, the amazing race a sperm makes on the road to fertilization. In each epic battle, millions of sperm compete while overcoming armies of antibodies, treacherous terrain and impossible odds to reach their single-minded goal. To portray the full weight of their monumental challenge, the National Geographic Channel literally brings to life this miracle of biology and athleticism, scaling each sperm to the size of an adult human.

Premiering Sunday, March 14, at 9 p.m. ET/PT, **Sizing Up Sperm** presents a creative twist on sex education, using real people to represent 250 million sperm on their marathon quest to be first to reach a single egg. Leading fertility experts walk us through the dramatic visual journey from the sperm's point of view, using striking landscapes to illustrate the various phases of the process, with the testicle represented by an oversized London skyscraper, and the extraordinary proportions of the female anatomy by the North American Rockies. It's survival of the fittest: within 30 minutes of ejaculation, over 99 percent of the sperm will be dead or dying. But for those that remain it will be a vicious 14-hour fight to the end, with only one champion.

The story begins in the testicle — depicted as a building that would be 3,000 feet, more than double the height of the Empire State Building, if the sperm were human-sized. Next it's a high-speed evacuation from the skyscraper along a 10-mile, ultra-fast water slide to the female, where the constant barrage of threats begin. For the sperm, landing in the female's vagina is like storming the beaches on D-Day, only facing chemical weapons in the form of a deadly acid attack on the hundreds of millions of invaders.

The survivors press on into the cervix high above them. In our people-sized sperm world that would mean climbing a ladder a mile into the sky, a gravity-defying feat that only a few will achieve. Once the heights have been scaled, they reach a cervix Stephen King style. It consists of hundreds of tiny branching tunnels that trap, crush and slowly kill sperm. From here, the remaining sperm enter the uterus, the equivalent of a two-mile-long field at these proportions. But this picturesque countryside is far from serene. Here the sperm are ambushed by the female's natural assassins, large white blood cells that dismantle the trespassing sperm. For the tiny fraction left, it's on to the fallopian tubes, where the egg may be waiting. One last obstacle remains — a freestyle swimming final of Olympic proportions, where the winner gains immortality, and the rest are killed.

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Intertwined with the drama of the sperm's journey, **Sizing Up Sperm** illuminates the truth behind some of the myths surrounding sex — including when and how to have it to improve the odds of fertilization, and whether the chances of conception improve with more enjoyable sex. Every day, 350,000 babies are born, and each stemmed from the one sperm that overcame remarkable odds to win the great sperm race. **Sizing Up Sperm** demonstrates this extraordinary journey, the intricacies of our bodies and the giant lottery of luck that is our reproductive process.

Sizing Up Sperm is produced by Blink Films and Cream Productions for the National Geographic Channel.

For more information, visit natgeotv.com/sperm.

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National Geographic Channel

Based at the National Geographic Society headquarters in Washington, D.C., the National Geographic Channel (NGC) is a joint venture between National Geographic Ventures (NGV) and Fox Cable Networks (FCN). Since launching in January 2001, NGC initially earned some of the fastest distribution growth in the history of cable and more recently the fastest ratings growth in television. The network celebrated its fifth anniversary January 2006 with the launch of NGC HD, which provides the spectacular imagery that National Geographic is known for in stunning high definition. NGC has carriage with all of the nation's major cable and satellite television providers, making it currently available in nearly 70 million homes. For more information, please visit www.natgeotv.com.

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