

## Acupuncture & Infertility



**S**tudies reported by The American Pregnancy Association suggest that the most effective fertility treatments involve a combination of acupuncture, herbal medicine, and traditional medical interventions. However, conception does sometimes occur without traditional medical interventions when acupuncture and herbal medicines are used alone.

The treatment of infertility with acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) dates back 3,000 years. These ancient, time-tested techniques improve fertility rates and support a woman's whole body, unlocking unlimited potential for health, healing and childbearing.

Acupuncture can be used to treat any type of fertility disorder. Acupuncture is often combined with herbal remedies to treat elevated follicle stimulating hormone (FSH), repeated pregnancy loss, unexplained (idiopathic) infertility, luteal phase defect, hyperprolactinemia (when not caused by a prolactinoma), polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) with anovulatory cycles and male factor including men affected with sperm-DNA-fragmentation.

In a 2007 study, researchers found that acupuncture may improve the quality of life in patients undergoing in vitro fertilization (IVF). It was also found that women

receiving acupuncture reported significantly less abdominal pain, other pain, nausea, and stress two hours after oocyte aspiration (egg collection) compared to women receiving conventional analgesia.<sup>3</sup> In 2008, the British Medical Journal published research which concluded that acupuncture can be offered as a significant, clinically relevant adjunct to IVF, relaxing the uterus and increasing blood flow for the successful implantation of an embryo within the uterine lining.

### ***An acupuncturist's approach to fertility***

According to the theories of acupuncture and TCM, infertility is caused by an imbalance of Qi (pronounced "chee") and blood affecting the healthy functioning of one or more of the organ systems. When Qi, also known as our vital energy, and blood are circulating freely throughout the body, every cell, tissue and organ is properly nourished and can function well. Acupuncture and TCM can raise the fertility potential of women by effecting the quality, quantity, balance and flow of Qi and blood.

Acupuncture treat infertility not only for women, but also treat male infertility. If the cause is low sperm count or immobile sperm, the treatment must last for at least three months because of the time it takes sperm to mature.

Below are three main systems that your acupuncturist treat infertility:

**Kidney Organ System:** The release of an ovum is controlled by the kidneys. The kidneys also create a substance called Jing Qi, which is required in order to have a healthy body, mind, and pregnancy. If an imbalance exists within the kidneys, Jing Qi may be inadequate in supply and may be a cause for infertility. Chinese herbal medicine, along with acupuncture, can nourish and support Jing Qi and overall kidney health.

**Spleen Organ System:** An adequate supply of blood is required by a woman's body to sustain a normal menstrual cycle, a growing fetus, and a healthy pregnancy. Disharmony within the spleen can result in an inadequate supply and imbalance of blood. Acupuncture and Chinese herbs can build and nourish blood in order to promote a healthy flow of blood to the uterus.

**Liver Organ System:** In order to conceive and have a

healthy pregnancy, it is important to have a free flow of Qi and blood throughout the body. The liver is in charge of facilitating this function. When it is out of balance, areas of the body will not receive the required supply of Qi and blood. This imbalance can lead to depression, anxiety, stress and increased possibility of infertility. Keep in mind that the organs described above reflect Chinese medical theories and philosophies. TCM and Acupuncture provide a safe, effective, drug-free, and natural approach to treating infertility and enjoying a healthy pregnancy. Here are a few reasons to try acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine:

- An acupuncturist does not treat just symptoms and signs, but instead activates the body's natural healing potential by treating the root causes that have lead to the problem or disease.
- Acupuncture and TCM are completely natural. No drugs are ever used. Invasive procedures and drug therapies that may be used in the treatment of infertility can cause undesirable side effects and accumulated toxicity in the body.
- Acupuncture and TCM can be used to strengthen, support, and balance overall health and well-being, therefore can increase the effectiveness of other procedures.

Also consider acupuncture during your pregnancy and birth. According to the World Health Organization, acupuncture has been found useful for relieving labor pain, nausea, vomiting, and significantly reducing the duration of labor.

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