

FERTILITY

How Acupuncture Helps



The treatment of infertility with acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) dates back 2,000 years. These ancient, time-tested techniques improve fertility rates and support a woman's whole body, unlocking unlimited potential for health, healing and childbearing.

Quick facts:

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.

Studies 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.

Researchers from Weill Cornell Medical Center in New York reviewed recent studies and concluded that acupuncture helps to:

- Increase blood flow to the uterus, which improves the chances of an ovum implanting on the uterine wall.
- Reduce anxiety and stress. The hormones that are secreted during stressful situations can significantly decrease fertility.
- Normalize hormone and endocrine systems that regulate ovulation, especially in women with polycystic ovarian syndrome.
- Positively affect the hypothalamic-pituitary-ovarian axis, which plays a key role in fertility.
- Regulate the menstrual cycle.

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.

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.

Acupuncture and TCM 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 signs and symptoms, but instead activates the body's natural healing potential by treating the root causes that have led to the problem or disease.

Acupuncture and TCM are completely natural. Drugs are never used.

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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MENOPAUSE

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Why is menopause treated like a problem, when in fact it is a naturally occurring process?

Menopause is a transitional period in a woman's body, following absence of any menstrual period for at least 12 months. This time of change may last a few months to several years. Chinese medicine recognizes this chemistry change as a natural process. As the female body tries to adapt to decreasing amounts of estrogen, symptoms such as hot flashes, night sweats, insomnia, fatigue, mood swings, memory loss, vaginal dryness, headaches, joint pain and weight gain come about in varying degrees.

Quick facts:

How Jing Qi can be drained:

- Overworking
- Overexertion
- Poor dietary habits
- Inherited weakness
- Sitting or standing for long periods
- Excessive activities (sexual, alcohol, drugs, late nights)

Acupuncture and Chinese medicine understand that these symptoms and signs are merely indications of an imbalance deep within the body. This 5,000 year-old healing art focuses upon correcting underlying imbalances that have occurred over the years. These imbalances, if left

unchecked, will result in a variety of symptoms and signs normally associated with a Western diagnosis of menopause.

Estrogen is similar to what acupuncturists call Jing Qi. It is like a gift that is given to all of us at the time of conception. It is the battery that provides us with the basic energy to power all our life functions. When Jing Qi is abundant, our ability to adapt to disease, illness and stress is optimal.

As we age, our supply of Jing Qi energy is slowly drained. Generally, Jing Qi naturally begins to decline between the ages of 35 to 60, although some people drain it faster than others. When Jing Qi declines, the organ systems within our body become unbalanced. This leads to various symptoms and signs, such as graying hair,

loss of libido, weakness of knees, urinary difficulty, poor memory, backache and fatigue.

Another factor that can contribute to menopause is an imbalance in Yin and Yang energies. Slowing of the flow of Yin can be a possible cause of this imbalance. Yin can be thought of as the cooling system of the body. When this cooling system declines, heat symptoms will naturally arise, leading to night sweats, restlessness, hot flashes, mood swings, heart palpitations and insomnia.

The decline of Yang energy can also lead to imbalance. Yang represents the warming and metabolizing functions of the body. When Yang is unbalanced, symptoms may include water retention, cold hands and feet, weight gain, edema, indigestion, hypertension, or raised cholesterol levels.

Left untreated, a decline and imbalance of Jing Qi, Yin or Yang will lead to the symptoms and signs that are normally associated with a Western diagnosis of menopause.

What can an acupuncturist do? An acupuncturist will conduct a thorough evaluation and a complete health history. The symptoms, signs and other information that is gathered are pieces of the diagnostic health puzzle. Putting together this puzzle allows a practitioner to develop a unique treatment plan that will address each patient's individual concerns.

When treating menopausal symptoms, an acupuncturist must first determine where the energy has changed, and what organ systems have become unbalanced. Once this is known, various natural therapies such as acupuncture, herbs, meditation, Qi Gong and diet can be used to correct the imbalances.

Acupuncture and Chinese medicine offer a safe, natural, drug-free and effective way to address menopause. Treatment supports the healing energies of Jing Qi, Yin and Yang, providing the body with the building blocks it needs in order to nourish, heal and regain balance.

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