

### What are the risks of using acupuncture?

There are minimal risks when using acupuncture for fertility treatment. A risk of miscarriage may develop if incorrect acupuncture points are used when a woman is pregnant. This is one reason why those wishing to include acupuncture in their treatment regimen should only be treated by an acupuncturist who specializes in treating fertility disorders. Acupuncture is not contraindicated for anyone regardless of their pathology or what medications they are taking.

### The Acupuncturist

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### Research

A study published in *Fertility & Sterility* medical journal, volume 77, April 2002, found that acupuncture dramatically improves the chances of becoming pregnant when used in conjunction with other assisted reproductive techniques.

Researchers from Weill Cornell Medical Center in New York reviewed 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, stress, and the hormones that are secreted during stressful situations that can significantly decrease fertility
- Normalize hormone and endocrine systems that regulate ovulation, especially in women with polycystic ovarian syndrome
- Positively affect the hypothalamic-pituitary axis, which plays a key role in fertility
- Regulates menstrual cycle

In a study published in *Human Reproductive Journal*, Volume 11, Number 6, 1996, an ultra sound was used to evaluate blood flow increases during treatment. According to Dr. Nancy Synderman, "When acupuncture needles are placed correctly, it can affect the nervous system. The idea is that if you stimulate the nervous system, you can make the uterus quiet and allow blood to flow." Relaxing the uterus and increasing blood flow allows for a successful implant of an embryo within the uterine lining.

Another study in the *British Medical Journal*, February 2008, concluded that acupuncture can be offered as a significant, clinically relevant adjunct to in vitro fertilization.

# Want to have a Baby?

Try  
Traditional  
Chinese  
Medicine



# Fertility

Chinese medicine for fertility is about harmonizing and nurturing your reproductive system. Traditional Chinese medicine stimulates the body's own natural production of hormones. The use of acupuncture and Chinese herbal preparations which have been used for thousands of years, balance the bodies energy meridians to get the I (oxygen) and blood to flow smoothly and increase your chances of conception.

## What does acupuncture do?

- Helps women conceive naturally.
- Increases your chances of success with IUI or IVF.
- Prevents uterine contraction post IVF embryo transfer. (This helps the embryo to successfully implant.)
- Reduces side effects of IVF medications.
- Resolves unexplained infertility, recurrent miscarriages, irregular menses, PCOS, endometriosis.
- Improves sperm quality including: count, motility, morphology(shape) and reduces sperm DNA fragmentation.
- Helps women over 40 or diagnosed with poor ovarian reserve conceive.
- Improves function of ovaries to produce higher egg quality.
- Increases blood flow to the uterus and increases the health of the uterine lining.
- Relaxes and de-stresses
- Strengthens the immune system and increases energy levels.

- Decreases chance of miscarriage.
- Prevents morning sickness.
- Helps speed up physical recovery after giving birth.
- Treats post-partum blues.
- Reduces recovery time after a varicocelelectomy.
- Naturally "turn" breeched presentation.

## What types of fertility patients typically get acupuncture?

Acupuncture can be used to treat any type of fertility disorder including spasmed tubes. (Spasmed tubes are often de-spasmed with acupuncture, though blocked tubes will not respond to acupuncture). Acupuncture is often combined with herbs 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 annovulatory cycles, and male factor including men affected with sperm-DNA-fragmentation.

## What does Chinese medicine not treat?

Acupuncture and herbs will not work to address tubal adhesions which can occur as a result of pelvic inflammatory disease or endometriosis. However, in this situation, an individual could still benefit from acupuncture and herbs because of the potential effect of improved ovarian and follicular function. Additionally, it is shown that acupuncture can increase blood flow to the endometrium, helping to facilitate a thick, rich lining.

## When should acupuncture treatment begin?

Acupuncture is similar to physical therapy in that it is a process oriented method of medical intervention. It is better to do more than less. Patients are commonly treated for three to four months before an insemination, in vitro fertilization (IVF), or donor-egg transfer. This period of treatment seems to have a therapeutic effect.

In a study by Stener-Victorin et al from the Departments of Obstetrics and Gynecology Fertility Centre, Scandinavia and University of Gothenburg, women are encouraged to receive acupuncture treatments pre and post embryo transfer. Clinical observations suggest that the most effective fertility treatments involve a combination of acupuncture, herbal medicine, and traditional medical interventions. However, conception does sometimes occur when acupuncture and herbal medicines are used without traditional medical interventions.

## When should I stop getting acupuncture?

Typically most miscarriages occur within the first three months of pregnancy. Therefore, treatment of patients may often last through week twelve to help prevent miscarriage.

## Why should you try acupuncture?

Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine can be used to strengthen, support, and balance overall health and well-being, so other fertility procedures are more effective.