



Acupuncture and Fertility

The treatment of infertility with acupuncture and Chinese medicine 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.

A landmark study published in the medical journal *Fertility & Sterility*¹ found that acupuncture dramatically improves the chances of becoming pregnant when used in conjunction with other assisted reproductive techniques. Researchers from Weill Cornell Medical Center² 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-ovarian axis, which plays a key role in fertility
- Regulate menstrual cycle

In a study published in *Human Reproduction Journal*³ an ultrasound was used to evaluate blood flow to the uterus during acupuncture treatments. The study found blood flow increases during treatment. According to Dr. Nancy Snyderman, "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 the successful implant of an embryo within the uterine lining.

Acupuncture and Chinese medicine can raise the fertility potential for women by affecting the quality, quantity, balance and flow of Qi and blood. When Qi (also called Life Energy) and blood are circulating freely throughout the body, every cell, tissue and organ is properly nourished and functioning well. When this occurs, a woman's health and fertility are increased.

According to the theories of acupuncture and Chinese medicine, infertility is caused by an imbalance of Qi and blood affecting one or more of the Organ Systems. (Please keep in mind that the Organs described reflect Eastern medical theories and philosophies)

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 infertility may be a result. 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. A disharmony within the Spleen can result in an inadequate supply and imbalance of blood. Acupuncture and Chinese medicine 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 the smooth flow of Qi and blood. 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 anger, and decrease fertility.



Acupuncture and Chinese medicine 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 Chinese medicine.

- 1. An acupuncturist does not treat just symptoms and signs, but instead activates the body's natural healing potential for treating the root causes that have lead to the problem or disease.*
- 2. Acupuncture and Chinese medicine are completely natural. No drugs are ever used. In the Western treatment of infertility, undesired side effects and accumulated toxicity from invasive procedures and drug therapies may occur.*
- 3. Acupuncture and Chinese medicine can be used to strengthen, support, and balance overall health and well being, so other fertility procedures are more effective.*
- 4. The practice of acupuncture and Chinese medicine is over 3,000 years old, and has helped millions of people become well and stay healthy.*
- 5. It works!*

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. There is also strong evidence that acupuncture can help with a breech birth^{4,6,7}.

¹ Paulus W. et. Al. Influence of acupuncture on the pregnancy rate in patients who undergo assisted reproduction therapy. Fertility and Sterility, volume 77, April 2002, 721 – 724.

² Five Ways Acupuncture Can Boost Fertility, www.prevention.com 2002

³ Human Reproduction Journal, Volume 11, Number 6, 1996

⁴ Fertility and Sterility, volume 78, December 2002, 1149 – 1153

⁵ Pins & Needles, Could acupuncture help promote pregnancy? www.ABCNews.com April 16, 2002

⁶ Acupuncture: Review and analysis of reports on control: clinical trials, World Health Organization, Geneva, 2002 www.who.int/medicines.

⁷ A Manual of Acupuncture, page 326: Peter Deadman and Mazin Al-Khafaji.

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