



“Pins & Needles”

Based on an article in the Chicago Sun-Times entitled “Pins & Needles” by Delia O’Hara

Suzanne and Dan Daley decided they wanted to have a baby five years ago. But when she went off the pill, which she had taken for 10 years, Suzanne’s menstrual cycles were wildly out of whack.

“My cycles were so crazy, I didn’t know if I was ovulating or not,” recalls Daley, 35, an exhibit manager at a Chicago museum, who said her cycles deviated from a normal 30 days to between 40 to 90 days.

Daley talked to her doctor, who suggested she try the fertility drug, Clomid.

“Because the pill had seemed to throw things off for me, I didn’t want to try another pill to make it right,” Daley recalls. “I wanted my overall health to be better.”

In October 2002, Daley went to Northwestern Memorial Hospital’s Center for Integrative Medicine, and began working with Andrea Friedman Ishikawa, a licensed acupuncture therapist. Friedman treated her with acupuncture every two weeks, plus a combination of herbs (Ishikawa is board-certified in Chinese herbology) that Daley brewed and consumed as a tea at home.

“My cycles were back to 30 days by January 2003,” Daley says. By last August, Daley was pregnant, and now the North Shore woman is the proud mother of twin boys. “If something is wrong, I would rather look at the big picture, and not just go for the quick fix,” she says.

Daley is one of an increasing number of Chicago area women trying the Chinese method to treating infertility, which takes a “big-picture” approach to this bewildering problem. A practitioner of the Chinese healing arts will look at a woman’s tongue, which is considered a map of the body, among other indicators. Acupuncture and herbs -- and patience -- may be among the prescriptions, along with a change of diet and an increase or change in exercise.

“Stress is a huge factor. We maintain open lines of communication with our patients’ reproductive endocrinologists or ob/gyns, so everyone is on the

same page.” She adds that the center never prescribes Chinese herb treatments if Western drugs are being used, to avoid unwanted drug interactions.

Ishikawa, who treated Suzanne Daley, now practices at the Healing Spring Acupuncture Center in Glenview, where the cost of an hour long treatment is \$75. She and her partner, Mitzi Labant, a graduate of the first class, in 1979, of the Midwest College (then Center) of Oriental Medicine, remember a time when acupuncturists could be -- and sometimes were -- arrested for practicing medicine without a license.

Acupuncturists have been licensed in Illinois for just five years, but the public has embraced their craft in growing numbers.

“It’s catching fire,” Ishikawa says. “In this toxic world we live in people are yearning to go back to a more natural and holistic way.”

Says Labant: “Acupuncture helps to empower a person. We’re talking about wellness here, and there are things you can do to stay well. The treatments open up the flow, get the energy moving. You have to make room for a baby to come into your life.”



Mitzi Labant & Andrea Friedman Ishikawa