Acupuncture for Fertility

More and more women are turning to acupuncture to increase their chances of conceiving a longed for baby.

Modern life seems to put so many demands on women in their twenties that making a decision to have a child is postponed. Career progression, affording a home, not meeting ‘the one’ until later in life, seem to be the main reasons why many women decide to have their first child over the age of 35, a time when our fertility, supposedly declines.

Of course, there is the inaccurate media message that as soon as we hit 35, all of our eggs are defunct! Interestingly, this message has had such an effect that some women over 35 stop using contraception because they think they are no longer fertile.

So how can acupuncture and diet help boost your fertility? A healthy, regular menstrual cycle is optimum to helping you conceive, being no less than 19 days and no more than 35 days in length. Acupuncture seems to regulate the menstrual cycle and is particularly beneficial for women who may have been diagnosed with PCOS (polycystic ovarian syndrome). This is a condition of the endocrine system where cysts develop in the ovaries and cause the body to miss ovulation. PCOS also raises high levels of the male hormone called androgens into the body which reduce the size of the follicles. Follicles produce the hormones oestrogen and progesterone and release an egg when you ovulate.

Having acupuncture around pertinent times of the menstrual cycle such as at ovulation and then at the highest point of progesterone, usually day 21, can encourage the body to work more effectively and contribute to a natural pregnancy without the need to resort to hormone therapy. A diagnosis from a Chinese medicine perspective would identify the best time in

your cycle for you to have acupuncture.

For many women, undertaking a course of acupuncture to help conception could simply be because it is going to help de-stress the mind and body. Trying to conceive can be extremely stressful, particularly once all the tests have been undertaken and there are no identifiable issues for not falling pregnant.

Stress causes cortisol, a steroid hormone to rise, which in turn can stop our bodies ovulating, so using acupuncture can keep the body receptive and open. Cortisol also affects the part of the immune system responsible for preventing miscarriage in early pregnancy, so having a course of acupuncture once you are pregnant can also be beneficial.

For women who choose medically assisted fertility cycles, acupuncture is often used to maximise the health of the developing follicles and to encourage the blood supply to the uterine lining, to aid with implantation of the egg. Acupuncture is also used to help minimise the side-effects of the drugs.

Acupuncturists who are also naturopaths are additionally equipped to give nutrition and lifestyle advice. Eating nutrient-boosting foods which suit you, and omitting foods and products from your life which can disrupt the functioning of the endocrine and digestive systems helps to address both toxicity and any vitamin or mineral deficiencies. These powerful natural tools used together can support the body in returning to hormonal balance, and can greatly enhance your chances of a having a naturally conceived healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby.

Author



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