

## Acupuncture for Infertility

Infertility is the inability of a couple to become pregnant after 12 months of trying to conceive. Acupuncture has become widely recognized by Western medical professionals as a viable treatment modality for infertility. Acupuncture works to improve the function of the reproductive system by promoting circulation to the pelvic region and regulating the hormones. It also increases the body's energy reserves, reduces stress and generally promotes a state of well-being.

For women with a history of miscarriage(s) or pregnancy complications, acupuncture and Chinese medicine can also help improve your odds of successfully maintaining a healthy pregnancy.

When seeking acupuncture for infertility, we assess your fertility type, medical diagnoses and any other concurrent fertility treatments such as IVF or IUI along with any other health concerns you may have. You can take a fertility type questionnaire online (<http://www.makingbabiesprogram.com/questionnaire/index.php>) and let us know what your type is; if you don't take the quiz, we will be able to determine it by looking at your health history and asking you questions. We can then suggest a treatment plan consisting of acupuncture with or without herbs. Herbs are often a more effective method of treatment than acupuncture alone for women who have significant irregularities in the menstrual cycle, and can be helpful for men to increase the production and function of sperm. We do not prescribe herbs to women undergoing IVF or IUI.

Chinese medical dietary and lifestyle factors can also play a role in helping you achieve a more fertile state. Following dietary and lifestyle recommendations according to your Chinese medical diagnostic pattern will improve your health (we have handouts at the clinic, and they are also available for download on our website).

For those who are considering getting pregnant in the near future, it is a good idea to start getting your body ready in advance and becoming more familiar with its rhythms. Women would be wise to start charting their cycles to get familiar with the timing of ovulation. A great book, *Taking Charge of Your Fertility* (<http://www.tcoyf.com/>), can help you learn how to track your cycles and learn when your best chances for conception are. This will increase your odds for success in becoming pregnant earlier rather than later. Those taking hormonal birth control would be wise to stop using it in order to give the body a chance to regulate itself without synthetic hormones. It can take some women a significant amount of time (months to a year or more) to have regular

periods and a healthy, substantial flow once they have stopped using birth control, especially if it has been used for a long time. Of course, if you plan to stop or change any medication you will need to discuss this with your doctor.

For more information and to address infertility, we're here to help. If this is a new concern for you and you are an existing patient, just make an acupuncture follow-up with a re-evaluation. If you have a loved one in need, you can also let them know that acupuncture can help them and we'd be happy to help.

Justine Deutsch, Lic. Ac.