



Acupuncture proves fertile ground for a healthy conception - Acupuncture and Fertility 16.08.2007

Can acupuncture really increase a woman's chances of conceiving? Research has found that acupuncture treatment can have a positive effect on those trying for a baby and can actually aid the conception process. Over the past twenty years, fertility problems have increased dramatically. At least 25* percent of couples in the UK planning a baby will have trouble conceiving, and more and more couples are turning to fertility treatments to help them start a family.

Fertility focused acupuncture treatment can help to increase blood flow to the reproductive organs, balance hormone levels, regulate the menstrual cycle and help improve the lining of the uterus and quality of eggs released. Additionally, conditions such as polycystic ovaries and endometriosis have also been shown to improve with acupuncture

Men today also face fertility problems. Benefits to male fertility have been helped by acupuncture with positive effects on sperm count, morphology and mobility.

Some of the positive effects of acupuncture in fertility treatment are thought to include:

- regulate the menstrual cycle and promote regular ovulation
- regulate the hormones to produce a larger number of follicles
- improve the functions of ovaries to produce better quality eggs
- enhance the vitality of sperm
- relieve the side effects of drugs used in IVF
- increase the thickness of the uterine lining so to encourage successful implantation
- reduce the chance of miscarriage

It is known that stress has an adverse effect on the fertility hormones. Acupuncture can be used to strengthen the constitution, thus enabling couples to cope with any stress and anxieties they may experience during the process of trying to start a family. The acupuncture treatment can help promote a calm, positive, relaxed frame of mind which can bring a more successful outcome for conception.

Gerad Kite, acupuncturist and British Acupuncture member Council explains how it can help: "Unexplained infertility is becoming endemic as more and more couples decide to wait to start a family until their 30's.



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Acupuncture has now been recognised as a viable treatment to help this patient group increase their chances of conception. The treatment supports the person by finding the key that will unlock the natural healing mechanism that not only brings balance to their system but can dramatically increase fertility".

Research

Previous studies have proved the effectiveness of acupuncture for infertility.

A 2004 study conducted by the Reproductive Medicine and Fertility Center in Colorado found that 51% of women who underwent both IVF and acupuncture treatment at the same time became pregnant, while only 36% of those who only underwent IVF did. The latter group also had higher rates of miscarriage and stillbirth (20%) compared to those women who had received acupuncture (8%).

A 2005 study conducted by Shanghai University in China found that acupuncture also helped treat male infertility. Of the men who participated, those who had acupuncture had an increased percentage of sperm in their semen; their sperm structure and morphology was also healthier than their counterparts who did not undergo acupuncture infertility treatment.

A report published in the journal *Fertility and Sterility* (2002) found the pregnancy rate in the group receiving acupuncture group was 42.5%, compared to the group which did not receive the therapy, where the rate was 26.3%.

<http://www.acupuncture.org.uk/content/news/news.asp?id=54>



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