

Acupuncture Helps Reproductive Health

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Acupuncture is a form of medicine that originated in China thousands of years ago. Its ability to enhance reproductive health and fertility has been documented in ancient medical literature as far back as the Han Dynasty. Today, more and more men and women are turning to acupuncture to support their health as it provides a gentle, safe, and cost effective natural solution to reproductive health care.

According to the principles of Oriental medicine, a person's health is determined by the quality and quantity of Qi, or vital life force, which circulates through pathways in the body. Acupuncture uses very thin sterile needle-like filaments to manipulate and balance the flow of Qi or energy through the body. When Qi is distributed properly, the body is well nourished and functions optimally. The physical, emotional and spiritual balance of Qi in our lives determines our reproductive health.

Imbalances of Qi give rise to infertility, endometriosis, menopausal symptoms, fibroids and Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS), a complex collection of symptoms affecting millions of women each month. Symptoms of PMS can include cramping, bloating, fatigue, breast tenderness, anxiety and depression, headaches and constipation. Acupuncture helps PMS by supporting the liver in ensuring the smooth flow of Qi and blood. Patients observe a reduction in irritability and other PMS symptoms after treatments targeting the release of stagnant liver Qi. In 1997, the National Institute of Health (NIH) issued a report suggesting acupuncture is effective in treating menstrual cramps and other symptoms associated with PMS. There was a statistical and relevant reduction in PMS symptoms with the acupuncture treatments, as the success rate of acupuncture in treating PMS symptoms was 77.8%, whereas it was 5.9% in the placebo group. *Archives of Gynecology and Obstetrics*. 2002; 67(1) Typically, PMS treatments courses span three cycles, rebalancing the entire body, not merely suppressing symptoms

Acupuncture can also improve your reproductive health by reducing stress. Stress minimization is very important when trying to conceive as stress reduces blood flow to the reproductive organs and negatively impacts our hormonal balance. A 2001 study from the University of California, San Diego found that women with high stress were 93% less likely to become pregnant. Acupuncture can increase blood flow to the uterus and improve ovarian function and the release of follicles. By helping to regulate the smooth flow of Qi in the body, menses becomes regulated, and ovulation predictability is improved.

In July 2005, the medical journal *Fertility and Sterility* reported that acupuncture treatments increases the motility levels of sperm and the percentage of healthy sperm. Acupuncture has also been found to improve the success rate of In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) from 26% to 43% according to a German study. A study by the Reproductive Medicine and Fertility Center in Colorado Springs found that acupuncture treatments significantly reduces the miscarriage rate from 20% not receiving acupuncture with IVF treatments to 8% of women combining acupuncture with IVF protocol. Acupuncture can be used alone or in combination with modern fertility treatment protocols. Chinese medicine naturally prepares the body for conception and a healthy full-term baby. Those who choose to use acupuncture to promote reproductive health are encouraged to begin acupuncture treatments at least three months prior to conception. Once a women is blessed with pregnancy, acupuncture can help with morning sickness, alleviate back pain, and fatigue.

Acupuncture can be of great benefit through all stages of our reproductive life while promoting general health. As women transition into menopause, acupuncture offers a safe and effective treatment of menopausal symptoms including fatigue, lethargy, mood swings, insomnia and loss of libido. Please consider acupuncture to support your reproductive health and overall well-being at all stages of life. If you have any further questions or concerns please feel free to call.
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