



## Fertility & Complementary Medicine

Have you considered the health of your reproductive system and how you can increase your chances of conception by taking care of it?

A couple is considered infertile if after one year of having unprotected sex they have not conceived. Infertility can be caused by hormonal imbalances or structural problems like fallopian tubal adhesions. Even though infertility is affecting more and more couples in recent times, in a lot of cases women and their partners are not clinically infertile, they are simply not physically and emotionally in full "reproductive balance."

### Acupuncture & fertility

From a Chinese Medicine perspective fertility requires balanced hormones, structurally sound reproductive organs, good health and wellbeing and a nutritious diet. Acupuncture helps by regulating and balancing the body's blood and energy flow (called Qi). This in turn regulates the body's systems helping to improve blood flow to reproductive organs, balance hormones, improve ovarian function and sperm production.

**Modern research has found that Chinese Medicine is beneficial to women in the following areas...**

### Regulate the menstrual cycle (1)

A regular cycle should be between 28 to 30 days in length, it should be free from pre-menstrual symptoms such as mood swings, bloating, breast tenderness, mid-cycle spotting and period pain.

### Improve the quality of a woman's fertile mucous

Fertile mucous is an egg-white stretchy secretion that is produced by the cervix around ovulation time. It is important because it assists the sperm to swim into the fallopian tubes so they can be in the right place when the egg is released.

The optimal time for ovulation to occur is between days 13 to 15. Acupuncture can help regulate ovulation if you are ovulating early or late in your cycle. (2)

### Promotes an efficient endometrium & menstruation

Normal menstrual bleeding is 3 to 5 days with fresh red blood and no clots or pain. The quantity and quality of the period reflects the quality of the uterine lining (endometrium). The endometrium is important as women with poor endometrial development can have trouble getting an egg to implant and this can be associated with recurrent miscarriage. Acupuncture increases blood flow to the uterus which helps to increase the thickness and quality of the endometrium and assists corpus luteal function which produces progesterone. (1)

### Healthy egg development

The process of the egg maturing comes under the influence of hormones. Acupuncture can help balance hormones and improve the integrity of the released egg by increasing the blood supply to the developing follicles, increasing the nutritional supply to the egg via the fluids that surround and nourish it.

### Increasing endorphin levels & relaxation

Acupuncture can help lower stress levels. (1) High stress can delay ovulation, affecting the quality of the egg. Acupuncture can assist with fertility whether trying to conceive naturally or with IVF assisted reproduction.

### Fertility for men

Male reproductive health plays an important part, it takes two to tango! Did you know that sperm quality starts to decrease from the age of 35? For men, about 90% of the problem is the quality and quantity of their sperm. Acupuncture treatment has been proven for boosting sperm quality. Other factors to consider are lifestyle, environment, substance abuse and disease, all of which may contribute to the inability to conceive.

### Exercise your way to a healthy body

Some very simple practices can be adopted to increase the health of your entire body and more specifically your reproductive system. Exercise is beneficial to increase blood flow and oxygen to your body. Studies show that people who are inactive can limit the amount of oxygenated blood to their pelvic region and reproductive organs. Increase your cardio with low impact exercise such as walking and strengthen your pelvic floor and lower abdominals with yoga or pilates.

**Questions about Acupuncture? Please call our clinic and one of our practitioners Hamish, Susan or Efrat will be happy to answer any queries.**



# Acupuncture Case Study

## How Acupuncture helped me...

Rosie 29 years of age, had been trying to conceive for the past year without falling pregnant.

## Patient History

Rosie visited her G.P and blood tests had shown low progesterone levels. She was referred to see an Acupuncturist, specialising in Fertility.

## Presenting Symptoms

- ⇒ Irregular menstrual cycles throughout her life averaging 52 days. Periods were considered normal.
- ⇒ Some neck & shoulder tension from working long hours on a computer, but no other health concerns to report.

## Treatment

The objective was to regulate Rosie's menstrual cycle to increase her chances of conception. A treatment plan was developed for the patient to receive Acupuncture once a week, from day 23 of her cycle, i.e. a week before the period should normally be due and until her period came.

## Outcome

Over the next 3 cycles, the length of the cycle steadily improved to 31 days. Rosie was having an average of 2 treatments per cycle during this time. By the fourth complete cycle Rosie conceived and went on to have a successful pregnancy, giving birth to a healthy baby girl.



# Naturopathy & Pre-Conception Health



## What can I do to improve my health?

The healthier you are the greater the chances of conception and having a healthy baby. Choose to eat organic foods and quality fresh produce as often as possible. Try to avoid any form of chemical or genetically modified food, to decrease the chances of miscarriage and complications during the pregnancy. Consider vegetable protein over animal, particularly soy if you are female, as it helps to regulate hormones.

Taking a good multivitamin designed for pre-conception care is necessary as we don't always get every nutrient we require from our diet.

**Women** - can supplement with Essential Fatty Acids, Folic Acid, Iron, Zinc and Selenium.

**Men** - can supplement with Zinc, Selenium and amino acids L-Arginine and L-Carnitine, which are essential for sperm function and morphology (formation of sperm).

## Supporting Hormones

Herbal remedies can be effective for hormone irregularities such as Vitex Agnus Castus (Chaste Tree) and other western herbal medicine prescribed by your Naturopath. A female Hormone Test taken from saliva is an effective way to determine patterns in your cycle that can cause issues with conception. This may detect early ovulation, anovulation (no ovulation), problems with the phasing of the cycles, such as short luteal phase and difficulties maintaining progesterone levels.

## Ovulation

For women, it is possible to monitor ovulation from patterns in your "Basal Body Temperature." There are fertility kits and books on the market which explain this in detail. Basically, you take your resting temperature before any movement first thing each morning. Your temperature will drop slightly before ovulation, then raise by 0.5 degrees Celsius after ovulation has occurred.

**To find out more about pre-conception health, make an appointment to see Allie our qualified Naturopath**



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