

DOES ACUPUNCTURE WORK?

Yes, in the past 3,000 years, more people have been successfully treated with acupuncture than with all other health modalities combined! Today, acupuncture is practiced in Asia, the now disbanded Soviet Union, and in Europe. It is now being used more and more in America by patients and physicians.

Acupuncture treatments can be given at the same time as other modalities are being used, such as conventional Western medicine, osteopathic or chiropractic adjustments, and homeopathic or naturopathic prescriptions. It is important that we know everything that you are doing so that we can help you get the most benefit from all your treatments.

DO I HAVE TO BELIEVE IN ACUPUNCTURE FOR IT TO WORK?

No. Acupuncture is used successfully on cats, dogs, horses, and other animals. These animal patients do not understand or believe in the process that helps them get better. A positive attitude toward wellness may reinforce the effects of the treatment received, just as a negative attitude may hinder the effects of acupuncture or any other treatment. A neutral attitude ("I don't know if I can really believe in this.") will not block treatment results.

ARE THERE ANY "DO'S OR DON'TS" FOR ME ON THE DAY OF TREATMENT?

Yes. To enhance the value of a treatment, the following guidelines are important:

- 1) Do not eat an unusually large meal immediately before or after your treatment,
- 2) Do not over-exercise or consume alcoholic beverages within six hours before or after treatment,

3) Plan your activities so that after the treatments you can get some rest, or at least not have to be working at top performance. This is especially important for the first few visits.

4) Continue to take any prescription medicines as directed by your regular doctor. Substance abuse (drugs and alcohol), especially in the week prior to treatment, will seriously interfere with the effectiveness of the acupuncture treatments.

Source: American Academy of Medical Acupuncture

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MEDICAL ACUPUNCTURE & INFERTILITY

A Brief Explanation for Patients from

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Acupuncture and Infertility

**TRADITIONAL AND
COMPLEMENTARY
HEALTH CARE NEEDS**



ACUPUNCTURE. WHAT IS IT?

Acupuncture is a method of encouraging the body to promote natural healing and to improve function. This is done by inserting needles and applying heat or electrical stimulation at very precise acupuncture points.

HOW DOES ACUPUNCTURE WORK?

The classical Chinese explanation is that channels of energy run in regular patterns throughout the body and over its surface. These energy channels, called meridians, are like rivers flowing through the body to irrigate and nourish the tissues. An obstruction in the movement of these energy rivers is like a dam that backs up the flow in one part of the body and restricts it in others.

The meridians can be influenced by needling the acupuncture points; the acupuncture needles unblock the obstructions at the dams, and reestablish the regular flow through the meridians.

Acupuncture treatment can therefore help the body's internal organs to correct imbalances in their digestion, absorption, and energy production activities, and in the circulation of their energy through the meridians.

The modern scientific explanation is that needling the acupuncture points stimulates the nervous system to release chemicals in the muscles, spinal cord, and brain. These chemicals will trigger the release of other chemicals and hormones which influence the body's own internal regulating system.

The improved energy and biochemical balance produced by acupuncture result in stimulating the body's natural healing abilities, increasing blood flow to the uterus, and in promoting physical and emotional well-being.

WHAT IS MEDICAL ACUPUNCTURE? IS IT DIFFERENT FROM ORDINARY ACUPUNCTURE?

Acupuncture is a very old medical art, and there are many approaches to learning and practicing it. Medical acupuncture is the term used to describe acupuncture performed by a doctor trained and licensed in Western medicine that has also had thorough training in acupuncture as a specialty practice. Such a doctor can use one or the other approach, or a combination of both as the need arises, to treat an illness.

HOW CAN ACUPUNCTURE HELP IN FERTILITY?

Medical acupuncture is a system which can influence three areas of health care:

- 1) Promotion of health and well-being,
- 2) Prevention of illness,
- 3) Treatment of various medical conditions.

While acupuncture is often associated with pain control, in the hands of a well-trained practitioner it has much broader applications. Acupuncture can be effective as the only treatment used, or as the support or adjunct to other medical treatment forms in many medical and surgical disorders. The World Health Organization recognizes the use of acupuncture in the treatment of a wide range of medical problems, including infertility.

As mentioned previously, acupuncture can affect blood circulation, nerves, muscles, and the hormonal system. Acupuncture helps increase blood flow to the uterus, decreases stress, and can help ease bloating and other possible side effects of infertility medications. In addition, acupuncture is particularly useful in resolving physical problems related to tension, stress, and emotional conditions.

DOES ACUPUNCTURE HELP WITH THE IVF PROCEDURE?

Yes. A recent study printed in "Fertility and Sterility" magazine quotes a study which concluded, "Acupuncture before and after embryo transfer results in higher pregnancy rates." In this recent study, the clinical pregnancy rate for the acupuncture group was 42.5%,

while the control group was significantly lower at 26.3%.*

Acupuncturists have also noticed an increased success rate when patients have treatments 60-90 days prior to having the IVF procedure.

HOW MANY TREATMENTS DO I NEED?

The number of treatments needed differs from person to person; however, most patients receive treatments one to two times per week for 12 sessions prior to their IVF procedure. In addition, you may schedule treatments at the doctor's office just prior to and after the egg implantation.

ARE THERE ANY SIDE EFFECTS?

Usually not. As energy is redirected in the body, internal chemicals and hormones are stimulated. Occasionally changes in appetite, sleep, bowel or urination pattern, or emotional state may be triggered. These should not cause concern, as they are simply indications that the acupuncture is starting to work.

It is quite common with the first or second treatment to have a sensation of deep relaxation or even mild disorientation immediately following the treatment. These will pass within a short time, and never require anything more than a bit of rest to overcome this.

WHAT ARE THE NEEDLES LIKE? DO THEY HURT?

Not usually. A very gentle needling technique is used and the sensation experienced from an acupuncture needle is nothing like that of a hypodermic needle. In fact, acupuncture needles are one-tenth the thickness of a hypodermic needle, more the size of a cat whisker. Most patients do not mind the needles and love coming in for their treatments. The needles are 100% sterile and are disposed of after the first use.

* Wolfgang E. Paulus, MD, Mingmen Zhang, MD, Erwin Strehler, MD, Iman El-Danasouri, PhD & Karl Sterzik, MD, "Influence of acupuncture on the pregnancy rate in patients who undergo assisted reproduction therapy", *Fertility and Sterility*, Vol. 77, No. 4, Apr. 2002