

Women's Health

Do you suffer from any of the following symptoms?

Painful periods, Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS), or fertility issues (difficulty falling pregnant or frequent miscarriages)? Or do you suffer mood swings, skin outbreaks and bloating, especially around the time of your menstrual cycle. Many women are affected by these conditions and rely on painkillers, the contraceptive pill or may have to take time off work, or change their lifestyle to deal with these symptoms.

Many women have come to rely on the contraceptive pill for relief against skin conditions, pre menstrual tension and period pain, rather than using it for contraception alone. This not only causes hormonal changes to the body but can lead to weight increase, mood changes and difficulty falling pregnant (after long term use).

If you suffer from gynaecological conditions, Chinese Medicine may be able to help you.

For many years women have been told that they just have to live with pain during their period, that weight gain and fatigue are just part of life or part of getting old, when in fact this shouldn't be the case. Women in China have for centuries been treated with Chinese Medicine. In fact it is part of their health system, used in most hospitals. In China, Chinese Medicine is not an alternative medicine; instead it is used in hospitals daily. Doctors perform their rounds administering Acupuncture, Chinese herbs and Western Medicine depending on the patient's condition.

Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS).

Australian research suggests that Acupuncture may be highly beneficial in treating infertility amongst women suffering from PCOS. The trial, the first of its kind, found that 70% of the participants had their menstrual cycles return for three consecutive months. Nine patients went from having no periods to getting their periods back during

treatments and then falling pregnant (Medical Observer 10 April 2009). Many women with PCOS suffer from excessive weight gain, sugar cravings, general lethargy and PCOS can also lead to difficulties conceiving. Chinese Medicine helps by restoring normal metabolic function and helping digestion.

Menstruation, Fertility and Chinese Medicine.

Chinese Medicine is rapidly gaining popularity in the West as an effective remedy for a wide range of gynaecological complaints. Recent studies have shown that Chinese Medicine is very effective in increasing the likelihood of a full term pregnancy (especially when combined with IVF).

Ideally the menstrual cycle should be pain free - emotionally and physically, there should be no cramping and no need for pain killers. A painful period may indicate endometriosis, a condition where the endometrium is not shedding properly and this can impact on fertility (causing miscarriages and difficulty falling pregnant). Regardless of whether you want to conceive, you should not have to put up with period pain, and having to schedule time off from work or social duties to deal with the pain.

How does Chinese Medicine help?

Women are born with a finite number of eggs which are more than halved by the end of puberty; this is why it can be so difficult to fall pregnant in your late 30's. The aim of Chinese Medicine is to increase the quality of these eggs by increasing blood flow around the ovaries and stimulate follicles to develop. Acupuncture has been found to increase blood supply to the womb and improve cells that come into contact with the lining of the womb which interacts with the embryo. Therefore Chinese Medicine is very beneficial if you are trying to conceive naturally or by other means.

What is IVF and how does Chinese Medicine help?

Recent statistics show that up to 15% of couples need medical intervention to become

pregnant and Australian scientists are now discovering that Acupuncture can support IVF.

In IVF hormones are injected to control ovulation, eggs are removed and fertilised outside the body, and after a few days embryos are transferred back into the womb. Around 3% of babies are born this way.

In a groundbreaking study conducted in Australia, 200 women received Acupuncture and were compared against a control group of women who received placebo Acupuncture. The trial found that in those women receiving real Acupuncture, the live birth rate was doubled. The British Medical Journal also reported that Acupuncture with IVF increased the pregnancy rate by 65%.

IVF is an expensive and stressful procedure. If Acupuncture increases the likelihood of pregnancy, then the need for more IVF cycles decreases as does the cost.

Therefore acupuncture is a safe, relaxing and relatively low cost treatment to improve success rates. It also helps with general health, increasing energy and regulating digestion, making you look and feel great.

Acupuncture in Pregnancy

Among women in labour and women at various stages of pregnancy, trials have shown Acupuncture to be very effective and safe. Acupuncture helps with fluid retention, assists with sugar cravings, nausea and lack of energy and can be used to induce labour if overdue.

Reference

TED J.KAPTCHUK (2000) *The Web That Has No Weaver: Understanding Chinese Medicine*, Revised edition first published in 2000 edn., Great Britain: NTC/Contemporary Publishing Group.