

INFERTILITY: Motherhood at any cost

by: Dr. Jummy Kim, Acupuncturist/Traditional Chinese Medicine

For a couple, the diagnosis of infertility can be difficult, but for a woman it can be devastating. For many women, being told that they are infertile is like being told their body has failed its very reason for existence.

Conception is a fragile miracle that can be affected by any combination of a thousand factors. If there are physical obstructions in the ovaries, fallopian tubes, or uterus, if any of her hormones are slightly off, if her menstrual cycle is out of phase, if her egg doesn't release at the proper time, if she doesn't produce enough estrogen to thin her cervical mucus, and the list can go on - if any of these problems are present, she may have a miniscule chance of conceiving that month, if at all. And all of these factors are affected not just by a woman's reproductive organs and hormones but also by her general health (i.e., stress levels, exercise and dietary habits).

Amy's Story

Amy was 35 years old and had been diagnosed with "unexplained infertility." This meant that her doctors could find no specific hormonal or physical reason for her inability to conceive. Her reproductive endocrinologist had put her on courses of hormone injections to stimulate her ovaries to produce more eggs, as well as intrauterine inseminations. But nothing had worked. A friend had told her about TCM/acupuncture treatments and Amy decided to book for a consultation.

Diagnosis and Treatment:

The first step was to diagnose what was going on with Amy's reproductive system. The second step was to change her diet. Depending on her diagnosis, certain foods will help to purify the blood, increase energy to the kidneys, or eliminate stagnation in the liver channel. For Amy's case, a series of acupuncture treatments were prescribed to clear her energy channels and help restore balance to her system. The final step was to increase her chances of conception through the use of herbs, which are natural substances that gently correct underlying deficiencies or clear obstructions. Herbal preparations and tonics have been used for thousands of years in Asia to help increase fertility. The individualized changes to Amy's diet, stress management, acupuncture and herbal treatment resulted in natural conception four and a half months after her first visit. She is currently expecting her second "acupuncture baby."

Acupuncture/TCM vs Western Reproductive Medicine:

Western reproductive medicine has provided some of the best publicized miracles of modern science. The "infertility epidemic" has spawned a huge biomedical industry aimed at treating those who want children but can't have them. However, assisted reproductive technology (ART) comes with a price as the physical, emotional, and financial costs of these treatments are

high. Research shows that young women using IVF techniques have between 20 and 30 percent chance of conceiving at a cost of at least ten thousand dollars per attempt. The chances fall to less than 10 percent for women at age thirty-nine and only 3 percent for women at age forty-four. On average, women go through seven cycles of ART before they either conceive or quit.

Traditional Chinese Medical treatments are designed to work with nature rather than against it, to allow conception to occur rather than force it. Most patients need to be on this program for at least three cycles before they can expect noticeable hormonal changes. For some women, TCM can be used alone or in conjunction with Western reproductive medicine. It can also help a woman move gently and naturally to a state of health and well-being that may allow her body to conceive and carry to term a healthy child.



Amy's Testimony:

"I saw the Western fertility doctors for almost 13 months and I felt I was getting nowhere. They couldn't figure out what was wrong after all the assessments and completing different steps to assist in fertility. I had almost given up and that was when my friend told me about an alternative approach. Before coming in for consultation with the TCM doctor, I did research on how acupuncture can help in becoming pregnant. After my initial visit with Dr. Kim, I felt hopeful. I followed her steps and felt more energetic and strangely more relaxed even after couple of sessions of acupuncture. After a couple of months, I became pregnant and gave birth to a healthy girl. I am now a firm believer that acupuncture does work!"

If you would like to know more about acupuncture and fertility, please book a complementary consultation at the Adelaide Health Clinic with Dr. Jummy Kim at 416-367-5200.