



HOLISTIC HEALTH PRACTICE

DR. AMIE SHIMMEL

## CHIROPRACTIC AND ACUPUNCTURE FOR INFERTILITY

A study from Harvard University showed that stress may reduce the function of the hypothalamic-anterior pituitary-ovarian axis, thus contributing to infertility. Stress stimulates the sympathetic nervous system to cause vaso and arterial constriction which results in degradation of blood flow to the uterus and ovaries. Arterial constriction is seen at the uterine artery and ovarian arteries. Beta-endorphins released via acupuncture intervention interrupts the negative activity of the sympathetic nervous system causing dilation of the arteries facilitating increased blood flow to the lining and ovaries. Thus, the lining thickens and there is often improved egg quality. This is sometimes all it takes to achieve a viable pregnancy.

### WHAT IS ACUPUNCTURE?

The intent of acupuncture therapy is to promote health and alleviate pain and suffering. The method by which this is accomplished, though it may seem strange and mysterious to many, has been time tested over thousands of years and continues to be validated today.

The perspective from which an acupuncturist views health and sickness hinges on concepts of "vital energy," "energetic balance" and "energetic imbalance." The acupuncturist assesses the flow and distribution of this "vital energy" within its pathways, known as "meridians and channels".

The acupuncturist is able to influence health and sickness by stimulating certain areas along these "meridians". Traditionally these areas or "acupoints" were stimulated by fine, slender needles. They adjust the "vital energy" so the proper amount reaches the proper place at the proper time. This helps your body heal itself.

### HOW DOES ACUPUNCTURE WORK?

The acupuncturist assesses and adjusts as well as invigorates and enhances the circulation of blood and distribution of "chi" (energy) throughout the body in order to promote health and healing. Modern research has described various physiological shifts following acupuncture, such as beneficial changes in the body's own natural painkillers, anti-inflammatory agents, immune system functions and hormonal activity.



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## WHY USE ACUPUNCTURE AS AN INFERTILITY TREATMENT OPTION? WHO IS THE TYPICAL PATIENT?

Acupuncture is often helpful where conventional medicine is not. Good candidates for trying acupuncture are people who have a functional, rather than structural reason for infertility (for example, damaged fallopian tubes are structural). Men and women with functional infertility would be encouraged to try acupuncture in addition to their standard medical treatment. If your husband has a low sperm count, poor morphology, poor motility and/or sperm DNA fragmentation he is a good candidate for acupuncture.

## HOW LONG WILL I BE TREATED FOR?

Dr. Shimmel recommends 6 to 10 treatments for women and their partners who are trying to conceive. Once pregnant, she can treat you for the first tri-mester (90% of failed pregnancies occur within the first trimester) to help keep you pregnant.

## IS IT SAFE?

If performed by a qualified, conscientious practitioner, yes. Certified Acupuncturists know the human anatomy well, and insert needles in a safe fashion. The instruments used to penetrate the skin are either pre-sterilized and disposable after a single use, or disinfected and sterilized in an autoclave, as surgical and dental instruments are, after each use.

## NOW THAT YOU'RE PREGNANT: CHIROPRACTIC CARE FOR SAFER EASIER PREGNANCIES

Chiropractic care is essential for the pregnant mother. The mother's pelvis undergoes many changes and adaptations to compensate for the growing baby and interference to her nervous system function providing greater health potential for both the mother and baby. Another reason for care throughout pregnancy is to help establish balance in the pelvis. Because of a lifetime of stress and trauma to her spine and pelvis, her pelvis opening is compromised, resulting in a less than optimum passage for the baby.

Additionally, these compensations to her spine and pelvis are likely to cause an imbalance to her pelvis muscles and ligaments. In some cases this ligamentous or muscular constraint restricts the baby's position and may prevent him or her from getting in the best position for birth. The Webster Technique, is a specific chiropractic adjustment that chiropractors trained in treating pregnant women do to help women achieve that balance, removes constraint and get in the best position for birth. Patients treated with this technique are believed to have faster, easier births.