Chinese Medicine and Women’s Health
What is Chinese Medicine?

“What Chinese Medicine is a pre-scientific system of thought and practice developed over 3,000 years ago. It is a form of logic and rational thinking thoroughly alien to the West because it is deeply rooted in the Taoist philosophy that has its own perception of body, health and disease.”

--Ted J. Kaptchuk- *The Web That Has No Weaver*
Central to this system of medicine is the concept of “Qi”. Qi is energy which flows through the body in pathways, called “meridians”. The meridians connect to internal organs.

When Qi is flowing smoothly the body is well. When Qi flow is blocked, the body becomes ill.
Is Qi Visible?

- Through a special type of technology, called Kirlian photography, we can see Qi or energetic bodies of living things. For example, this leaf has the top portion cut off. We can see that although the top portion is gone, the energetic body remains. The energetic body is composed of millions of electrons. These electrons of the energetic body serve as a template for the growth of the physical body of the leaf.
The research, authored in part by Neil Theise, a clinician and professor of pathology at NYU Langone Health, argues that the interstitium, a fluid-filled space between our skin and our muscles, should be considered an organ unto itself — and, as the estimated volume of this space is 20 percent of the fluid volume of the body, says Theise, the largest organ in the body.

“This is the layer of skin the acupuncture needle goes into,” says Theise. “There’s fluid in there. When you put the needle [into an accu-point], maybe the collagen bundles are arranged into a channel through which fluid can flow.”
How does Chinese Medicine manipulate energy to treat disease?

- Acupuncture balances Qi through the stimulation of points along meridian pathways. The points are stimulated with fine needles that are painless upon insertion. In children, tools are used to brush the meridians and balance the qi.

- Herbal Medicine balances Qi through the use of formulas. The formulas are recipes of a number of herbs that work synergistically. The use of herbal recipes prevents side effects and increase efficacy.
How do practitioners diagnose an imbalance of Qi?

Methods of Diagnosis:

- **Asking**: Medical evaluation of all organ systems of body
- **Looking**: Observe facial colors, posture, sound of voice, behavior, spirit, tongue
- **Tongue**: Color, shape, coating
- **Feeling**: Palpate areas of body, feel pulse
- **Pulse**: 28 qualities, 3 levels, 12 organ/meridian positions can be assessed through the pulse.
How Does Acupuncture Work?

• Acupuncture reduces anxiety, de-stresses and calms
• This is because of endorphin release
• Endorphins cause uterine artery widening which causes increased blood flow to the uterus and to the ovaries
• More blood flow means greater delivery of hormones, nutrients, oxygen and electrolytes and greater excretion of dead cell waste matter • This means improved egg quality

Your Endometrial Lining

• Just because you have a “perfect 10mm lining” does not mean that there is enough blood flow to ensure a successful implantation
• Acupuncture & herbs frequently help increase blood flow to your lining, increasing implantation rates
Acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine help to promote inner well-being, prevents disharmony and supports women throughout the phases of life. Including the following:

• **Regulating Women’s Menstrual Cycles** because of : Amenorrhea, Dysmenorrhea, Polycystic Ovary Syndrome, Premenstrual Tension
• **Fertility** with Acupuncture and Herbs
• **IVF** (In Vitro Fertilization) Support, increasing the chance of success by 40%-60%.
• **ICE** (Intercervical Insemination) Support and **IUI** (Interuterine Insemination) Support
• **Morning Sickness**
• **Delayed Labor** or Breech Presentation
• **Postpartum Health**
• **Peri-Menopause/Menopause/Post-Menopause** Sign and Symptoms
Natural Treatment for Healthy Period

• P.M.S.
  – *emotional:* Depression, Angry Outbursts, Irritability, Anxiety, Confusion, Social Withdrawal.
  -- *physical:* Breast Tenderness, Abdominal Bloating, Headache, Swelling of the Extremities.

• Amenorrhea, lack of period.
• Dysmenorrhea, painful periods.

Acupuncture, Herbal Medicine, Exercise, Relaxation, Psychotherapy.
Regulating the Menstrual Cycle:

- **Regulating the Menstrual Cycle:** Acupuncture and Chinese medicine can help to regulate menstrual cycles and/or decrease or stop pre-menstrual pain and mood changes. It can also help with pain, discomfort and headaches during the menstrual cycle. In Chinese medicine your menstrual cycle is broken up into 4 stages. Each week is a new stage, by using Acupuncture and Chinese herbs together helps to regulate these stages helping you to have a regular, less painful and more comfortable period.
Menstrual Cycle

28 DAY MENSTRUAL CYCLE CHART

FOLLICULAR PHASE
Freshly ground flax, chia, or pumpkin seeds

FULL MOON

LUTEAL PHASE
Freshly ground sunflower or sesame seeds

Dr Allegra
NATURAE CLINIC

naturaeclinic.com
Principles of Treatment in TCM
Cycles of Flow

• Our Planet, Human and animal physiology are subject to seasonal, lunar, and circadian rhythms.
• The lunar cycle has an impact on human reproduction, in particular fertility, menstruation, and birth rate.
• Admittance to hospitals and emergency units because of various causes (cardiovascular and acute coronary events, variceal hemorrhage, diarrhea, urinary retention) correlated with moon phases.
• In addition, other events associated with human behavior, such as traffic accidents, crimes, and suicides, appeared to be influenced by the lunar cycle.
• Our creative biological and psychological cycle parallels the phases of the moon; recent research has found that the immune system of the reproductive tract is cyclic as well, reaching its peak at ovulation, and then beginning to wane. From ancient times, in many cultures, have referred to women having their menstrual periods as being “on their moon.”
TCM Menstrual Cycle

- Day 1: Bleeding starts, mood subdued
- Day 2: Sleep most restless
- Day 21: Days 6 - 14 best for mammogram for premenopausal women
- Day 28: Estrogen level rises
- Days 15-21 best for breast surgery
- Days 14: Conception most likely
- Days 13: Sexual fantasies & desire peak
- Days 12: Estrogen peaks & luteinizing hormone surges
- Days 11: Dreams most positive
- Days 10: Breathing easiest
- Days 9: Body temperature rises
- Days 8: Vision & smell sharpest
- Days 7: Conception most likely
- Days 6: Best time for pap smear
- Days 5: Feelings of self-esteem high
- Days 4: Pain tolerance best
- Days 3: Mood elevated, premenstrual dysphoric disorder begins
- Days 2: Water retention, weight gain & breast tenderness common
- Days 1: Arthritis, asthma, diabetes, digestive tract disorders, fibromyalgia, hay fever, migraine, seizures & skin conditions flare (day 25 - day 2)
- Days 29: Ovulation occurs
- Days 30: Ovulation occurs

Day 1

Day 2

Day 3

Day 4

Day 5

Day 6

Day 7

Day 8

Day 9

Day 10

Day 11

Day 12

Day 13

Day 14

Day 15

Day 16

Day 17

Day 18

Day 19

Day 20

Day 21

Day 22

Day 23

Day 24

Day 25

Day 26

Day 27

Day 28
Fertility

• **Fertility:** Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine is great at optimizing the body's ability to become pregnant. Acupuncture and Chinese herbs help regulate a woman's cycle which is very important when one wants to become pregnant. TCM helps ovulation, cervical lining thickness and hormone regulation to help with fertility. In addition to Acupuncture and Chinese herbs.
Traditional Chinese Medicine

• Increase blood flow to the reproductive areas
• Balance hormones
• Reduce stress & anxiety
• Improve implantation
• Reduce inflammation from Endometriosis
• Decrease adhesions & fascial restrictions
• Decrease incidence of miscarriage
• Increase sperm count
• Improve sperm motility and morphology
Women’s Fertility and Acupuncture

• Acupuncture increases Assisted Reproductive Therapy (ART) success by 15%.

• Based on research acupuncture seems to offer a valuable alternative therapy for female infertility due to hormone disorders.
The Causations of Infertility in Traditional Chinese Medicine

- **Male-**
  1. Kidney yin deficiency
  2. Kidney yang deficiency
  3. Liver qi stagnation
  4. Spleen qi deficiency
  5. Blood stagnation

- **Female-**
  1. Kidney deficiency
  2. Cold uterus
  3. Blood deficiency
  4. Liver depression
  5. Stagnant heat
  6. Phlegm dampness
Kidney Yin deficiency signs & symptoms

- **Deficiency.** Dry mouth, especially at night. Dark, scanty urination. Night sweats. Thirst. Dizziness. Malar flush. ...
- **Tongue.** Reddish tongue with little or no coating.
- **Pulse.** Floating and empty pulse.
Cold Uterus

- Prolonged menstrual discharge but scanty in volume and mixed with dark clots
- Cold lower abdominal pain relieved by warmth
- The tongue coating is thin and white
- The pulse is deep and slow
Blood deficiency signs & symptoms

- Withered, sallow complexion
- Scanty menstrual discharge during the last days of the period but light in color, dizziness, blurred vision, dry skin, constipation
- Insidious pain after menstruation.
- Tongue is pale
- Pulse is thready and weak
Liver depression
signs & symptoms

- Early or late menstruation, scanty in volume and dark in color
- Abdominal distention
- Premenstrual breast distention
- Mental depression, eructation and sighing
- Tongue is red with a thin coating
- Pulse is wiry and rapid
Stagnant Heat
signs & symptoms

• Scanty menstrual volume, red purplish in color and mixed with clots.
• Distention and pain in the lower abdomen, especially along the sides, which refuses palpation.
• History of lumbar soreness
• Distension & pain of the chest and hypochondriacs
• Tongue is red with a thin coating
• Pulse is wiry and rapid
Phlegm dampness signs & symptoms

- An obese constitution
- History of excessive phlegm
- Pallor or puffiness
- Delayed menstruation or amenorrhea and excessive leucorrhea
- Tongue has a thin, white coating
- Pulse is wiry and slippery
Classic Herbal Formulas
Benefits Fertility

1. Yu Lin Zhu- *kidney deficiency*
2. You Gui Wan- *kidney deficiency*
3. Wu Zi Yan Zong Wan-*kidney deficiency*
4. Ai Fu Nuan Gong Wan-*cold uterus*
5. Ren Shen Yang Rong Tang-*Blood deficiency*
6. Yang Jing Zhong Yu Tang-*Blood deficiency*
7. Chai Hu Shu Gan San-*liver depression*
8. Kai Yu Zhong Yu Tang-*liver depression*
9. Qi Re Xiao Yu Tang- *Stagnant heat*
10. Xiao Zhi Mo Dao Tan Tang-*Phlegm dampness*
11. Qi Gong Wan-*Stagnant heat*
When should I get Acupuncture?

- For best results start acupuncture **90 days before IVF cycles**
- At the beginning of a cycle for improving blood flow to the uterus (uterine lining)
- Before ovulation to help follicles mature
- 5-10 days after ovulation for improved implantation
- Weekly when pregnant to prevent miscarriage during the first trimester
Massage Works to Relieve Stress

- Stress is reduced by activation of the parasympathetic nervous system
- Relaxation response is activated
- Increased levels of dopamine and serotonin are linked to decreased stress levels
- Reduction in cortisol, norepinephrine and epinephrine levels
- Release of endorphins
Diet and Food Choices

- **Fertility Enhancing Foods**
  - Fresh vegetables and fruit
  - Beans and non hormonally treated meats
  - Whole foods such as brown rice, whole grains oats and spelt
  - Natural sweeteners such as agave nectar

- **Foods to reduce or avoid**
  - Refined Carbohydrates
  - Coffee and alcohol
  - Artificial sweeteners
  - Wheat gluten
  - Heavy Creams and Cheeses
Dietary Supplements

• **CoQ-10** – increases egg quality by supporting mitochondrial function & energy production; supports cellular energy production to improve motility
• **Wobenzym** – enzymes to help decrease autoimmune reactivity
• **Wheat Grass** – improves egg quality by lowering FSH levels
• **Royal Jelly** – improves egg quality by adding essential nutrients
• **High Quality Multi-Vitamin and Mineral**
• **Fish Oil or Flax Seed Oil (EFAs)** – decreases inflammation, calms reactivity, increases uterine lining quality, overall support for hormonal balance, moderates NK cell activity
Invitro Fertilization, ICI or IUI:

- **Invitro Fertilization, ICI or IUI:** Acupuncture and Chinese herbs also work as a wonderful addition to IVF, ICI or IUI treatments. Through having regular Acupuncture leading up to your IVF transfer and by having Acupuncture on the day of an IVF transfer one can increase their chances of becoming pregnant through IVF by 40%-60%.

- Similarly Acupuncture can help increase the chances for women using the ICI or IUI processes to conceive.

- There has been great research done to show the effectiveness of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine in the areas listed below
  - How acupuncture can help to regulate hormones directly involved with implantation and follicle development
  - How acupuncture can increase pregnancy rates when used prior and post Invitro Embryo Transfers
  - The ability of acupuncture to increase blood supply to the uterus and ovaries
  - The ability of acupuncture to decrease the presence of abnormal sperm and increase sperm motility.

For abstracts and details about this research [click here](http://www.acupunctureivf.com.au/pages/research_and_reviews.php)
Invitro Fertilization, ICI or IUI:

- You can also look at some fertility research links below:
- There has been great research done to show the effectiveness of Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine in the areas listed below – by: Debra Betts:
  - How acupuncture can help to regulate hormones directly involved with implantation and follicle development
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When should I get acupuncture?

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Acupuncture & IVF procedures

- Research in Christian Lairize Institute in Germany

- 160 women getting IVF
- Acupuncture before & after the embryo transfer
- 50% of the patients increased successful implantation.
- IVF group= 26.3 %
- IVF plus acupuncture = 42.5 %
- AAI successful rate is 64.9 %
  of integrative IVF patients at December, 2007.
The German protocol (Paulus) “gold standard” acupuncture protocol for IVF cycle.
Acupuncture on the day of Embryo Transfer

Acupuncture on the day of ET significantly improves the reproductive outcome of IVF/ICSI. Compare to no acupuncture.

2. Repeating acupuncture on ET day and 2 days after provided no additional benefit

Conclusion:

Recent medical studies prove acupuncture can:

- Improve IUI/IVF rates 50%, the acupuncture 25 minutes before and after embryo transfer
- Increase the thickness of the uterine lining prior to ovulation
- Reduce the effects of PCOS with Electro- acupuncture
- Enhance the management of sub- fertility, ovulation induction, blood flow, increased sperm motility and stress reduction
Endometrial Blood Flow Pre & Post Acupuncture Treatment

Pre acupuncture

Post acupuncture
ACUPUNCTURE AND HERBAL MEDICINE OFFERS A SAFE, COST EFFECTIVE AND NON-INVASIVE APPROACH TO CONCEPTION

For every 10 women receiving acupuncture, there would be one extra successful embryo transfer.

• Not only is it a fraction of the cost, but also the body will be more receptive to fertility medications if assisted therapies are needed. However, if you are already beginning an IVF cycle acupuncture and herbs can greatly enhance the outcome and success of that cycle.

• Acupuncture has been used for centuries in China to regulate female fertility, and in recent years, scientists have been looking at whether it could boost IVF chances. Research, from the VU University in Amsterdam and the University of Maryland School of Medicine, combined the results of seven trials involving 1,366 women in an attempt to provide a clearer picture of the benefits.
Study* shows that Acupuncture Increases Success Rates Significantly….

42.5 % became pregnant as opposed to 26.3%

In this study patients receiving Assisted Reproductive Therapy were divided into two groups. The first group received an acupuncture treatment 25 minutes before and after embryo transfer. The second group did not receive acupuncture before or after embryo transfer. In the group that received the acupuncture, 42.5 % became pregnant as opposed to 26.3% of the women who did not receive acupuncture.

By having regular acupuncture treatments three months prior to embryo transfer, pregnancy rates can increase up to 60% according to Dr. Lifang Liang O.M.D., Ph. D., L.Ac. in her book “Acupuncture & IVF”

* Influence of acupuncture on the pregnancy rate in patients who undergo assisted reproduction therapy
General Infertility Acupuncture Research

- Reduction of blood flow impedance in the uterine arteries of infertile women with electro-acupuncture - Elisabet Stener-Victorin, Urban Waldenstrom, Sven A. Andersson and Matts Wikland
- Acupuncture Normalizes Dysfunction of Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Ovarian Axis - Bo-Ying Chen M.D., Professor of Neurobiology
- Effects of Electro-Acupuncture on Nerve Growth Factor and Ovarian Morphology in Rats with Experimentally Induced Polycystic Ovaries - Elisabet Stener-Victorin, Thomas Lundeberg, Urban Waldenstrom, Luigi Manni, Luigi Aloe, Stefan Gunnarsson, and Per Olof Janson
- Substitution of Acupuncture for HCG in Ovulation Induction - Cai Xuefen, Obstetrical & Gynecological Hospital, Zhejiang Medical University, Zhejiang Province
- Relationship Between Blood Radioimmunoreactive Beta-Endorphin and Hand Skin Temperature During The Electro-Acupuncture Induction of Ovulation - Chen Bo Ying M.D. Lecturer of Neurobiology, Institute of Acupuncture Research, and Yu Jin, MD., Prof of Gynecology, Obstetricus and Gynecology Hospital Shanghai Medical University, Shanghai, People’s Republic of China
- Role of acupuncture in the treatment of female infertility - Raymond Chang, M.D., The Institute of East-West Medicine, The Department of Internal Medicine, Weill Medical College of Cornell University. Pak H. Chung, M.D., The Department of Internal Medicine, Weill Medical College of Cornell University. Zev Rosenwaks, M.D., The Center for Reproductive Medicine and Infertility
In Vitro Fertilization Acupuncture Research

- Influence of acupuncture on the pregnancy rate in patients who undergo assisted reproduction therapy - Wolfgang E. Paulus, M.D., Department of Reproductive Medicine, Christian-Lauritzen-Institut. Mingmin Zhang, M.D., Department of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Tongji Hospital, Tongji Medical University, Wuhan, People’s Republic of China. Erwin Strehler, M.D., Department of Reproductive Medicine, Christian-Lauritzen-Institut. Imam El-Danasouri, Ph.D., Department of Reproductive Medicine, Christian-Lauritzen-Institut. and Karl Sterzik, M.D. Department of Reproductive Medicine, Christian-Lauritzen-Institut.

- Acupuncture Treatment For Infertile Women Undergoing Intracytoplasmic Sperm injection - Sandra L. Emmons, MD, Phillip Patton, MD

- Acupuncture on the day of embryo transfer significantly improves the reproductive outcome in infertile women: a prospective, randomized trial - Lars G. Westergaard, M.D., Ph.D., Qunhui Mao, M.D., Marianne Krogslund, Steen Sandrini, Suzan Lenz, M.D., Ph.D., and Jørgen Grinsted, M.D., Ph.D.

- Influence of acupuncture stimulation on pregnancy rates for women undergoing embryo transfer - Caroline Smith, Ph.D., Meaghan Coyle, B.Hlth.Sc. (Acup.), and Robert J. Norman, M.D.

- Effect of acupuncture on the outcome of in vitro fertilization and intracytoplasmic sperm injection: a randomized, prospective, controlled clinical study - Stefan Dieterle, M.D., Gao Ying, M.D., Wolfgang Hatzmann, M.D., and Andreas Neuer, M.D.
Postpartum Health:

• **Postpartum Health:** Postpartum health is very important and often not given as much attention as your health while you are pregnant. Use of Acupuncture and Herbs after labor can be very helpful for a quicker recovery for the mother including more energy and recovery from labor.
Menopause

Most women will spend one-third to one-half of their lifetime in post menopause.

75 percent of all women experiencing ‘hot-flashes’.
80 percent of women, hot flashes occur for two years or less

20–30% women experience severe hot flashes.

Starts as early as age 40 years old
Peri-Menopause
Menopause & Post-Menopause:

• **Peri-Menopause/Menopause/Post-Menopause:** In Chinese Medicine this time of a women’s life is called her second spring, a time to have a new freedom on life. Acupuncture and Chinese herbs can help with a women’s transition into her second spring by decreasing or stopping hot flashes, night sweats, insomnia and mood swings to name a only a few of the signs and symptoms of menopause that it can help with.
### Menopausal Symptoms

Between the ages of 42 and 55, five to ten years prior to menopause, the ovaries become less sensitive to hormonal signals which stimulate estrogen and progesterone. The ovaries do not produce consistent amounts of hormones, the menstrual cycle becomes irregular. Eventually, the ovaries stop producing enough of the estrogen hormone, periods cease, and menopause arrives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Menopausal Symptoms</th>
<th>Other Symptoms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hot flashes</td>
<td>Headaches, fatigue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaginal dryness and atrophy</td>
<td>Short-term memory lapses,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water retention</td>
<td>Lack of concentration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fat and weight gain,</td>
<td>Dry, thin, wrinkly skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>esp. hips, thighs, and abdomen</td>
<td>Thinning of scalp hair,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sleep disturbances</td>
<td>Some increase of facial hair</td>
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<tr>
<td>(insomnia, less REM-time sleep)</td>
<td>Bone mineral loss (osteoporosis)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decreased libido</td>
<td>Diffuse body aches and pains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mood swings, depression, irritability</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Menopausal Symptoms (Continued)
- Headaches, fatigue
- Short-term memory lapses,
- Lack of concentration
- Dry, thin, wrinkly skin
- Thinning of scalp hair,
- Some increase of facial hair
- Bone mineral loss (osteoporosis)
- Diffuse body aches and pains
Can Herbs help Menopause?

- 70% of Japanese gynecologists integrate Herbal Medicine into their medical practice.

- 90% of those prescribe Herbal Medicine for their menopausal patients as treatment of first choice.
Menopause

• Approximately 1.3 million women reach menopause each year.

• It is estimated that more than 55 million women are menopausal in the United States.

• By 2010, 60 million women will be close to, or complete with, the transition of menopause.
Menopause and a Healthy Cardiovascular System

Exercise is very important to prevent Osteoporosis but also to prevent weight gain and cardiovascular protection

• The loss of natural estrogen as women age may contribute to a higher risk of heart disease and stroke after menopause. Menopause itself appears to increase female risks of coronary heart disease and stroke.

• Studies show that women after menopause have higher levels of triglycerides, cholesterol, very low-density lipoprotein (VLDL) cholesterol, and low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol than women before menopause.
Osteoporosis can often be prevented or, at least, minimized, by simple improvements in nutrition and exercise.
Recommended Reading

• *The Infertility Cure* by Randine Lewis, P.HD.

• *Inconceivable* by Julia Indichova

• *Healing with Whole Foods* by Paul Pitchford

• Research Papers
  • http://www.thefertilityclinic.com/research-on-acupuncture-for-fertility.html