

# A Chinese Medicine Approach to Infertility

BY CORINNA MCFARLANE, D.TCM, D.O.M., NCCAOM  
JEFF MCMACKIN, D.TCM, D.AC., D.C.H.

Infertility is defined as the inability to conceive after 2 years of trying. Today one in six couples experience this and there are several reasons for this apparent rise. One of the factors is environmental pollutants, which affect both men and women's fertility. Many women are also pursuing a career before trying to begin a family thereby increasing the rate of age-related infertility. Another factor is sexually transmitted diseases, which can cause pelvic inflammatory disease that can hinder a woman's ability to conceive. Lastly, stress and emotional factors contribute greatly to higher rates of infertility.

infection resulting in scarring of the fallopian tubes, immune system problems, and hormonal imbalances. Hormonal imbalances can be caused by stress or emotional upset. In fact, depression can hinder one or several biological factors crucial to fertility including maturation of the egg, ovulation, and implantation.

Common issues for men with regards to infertility include low sperm count, impaired motility, low testosterone levels, and emotional stress. Stress factors have been associated with significant drops in sperm count and quality.

70% of all cases of infertility are related to complications with female reproductive health and 30% to male. For women the most common factors affecting infertility are: irregular ovulation or anovulation (i.e., no ovulation), excessive menstrual bleeding, endometriosis, a history of pelvic

Chinese Medicine is very successful in treating many gynecological conditions that accompany and contribute to infertility, such as irregular menstruation, anovulation, amenorrhea (i.e., periods stop), endometriosis, uterine fibroids, and heavy bleeding. Chinese medical treatment can


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regulate hormone imbalances and stabilize estrogen and progesterone levels, thereby thickening the lining of the uterus. By regulating hormones it can also help decrease FSH levels and improve ovarian function.

Using Chinese medicine in conjunction with ART (artificial reproductive technology) patients find they experience fewer side effects from the Western drugs and feel more at ease. Acupuncture not only helps the patient to relax, but also reduces the contractility of the uterus, thereby, significantly improving the implantation process and preventing miscarriage. In fact, a recent Germany study found that using Acupuncture with IVF (in vitro fertilization) achieved a 42% clinical pregnancy rate compared to 26% in the control group that did not receive acupuncture. This study involved giving acupuncture shortly before and after the transfer of embryos.



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