**Fertility Treatment Recommendations**

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Every acupuncture treatment plan will be customized to address the individualized patient’s needs. One theme that is common throughout the different scenarios depicted below is the need to begin acupuncture before the month of assisted reproductive therapy. Eggs begin their maturation 90 days before they are chosen for ovulation so it is during that 3 months when their health can be affected. It is highly advisable to have a consultation 2-3 months before an IVF or medicated cycle so that diet, lifestyle and exercise changes can be made in advance and the body may create a foundation for a healthier, more balanced state of fertility.

**Clomid Cycle**

* It is optimal to begin treatment 1 session per week 2 months in advance to optimize hormonal balance and regulate any menstrual disorders such as heavy or light periods, scanty cervical fluid, delayed ovulation, etc.
* 1-2 treatments per week during the Clomid and follicular development phase of the cycle to enhance follicle growth, egg health, and endometrial lining
* 1 treatment 5-7 days after ovulation to relax the uterus during implantation time

It is often the case that women will notice thinning or nonexistent cervical fluid and scantier periods during or after repeated Clomid cycles. These symptoms along with the feeling of hot flashes or headaches is a side effect of the medication which interferes with your body’s ability to produce adequate levels of estrogen. Acupuncture and Chinese herbs can correct this imbalance quickly and efficiently and it is highly recommended that women seek treatment for this before moving on to more advanced reproductive therapies such as injectable medications. Re-establishing your natural estrogen and FSH pathways is extremely important to the health of the eggs and plays a large role in sustaining future pregnancies achieved with IVF or IUI.

**Gonadotropin/Injectable Medication Cycle with or without IUI**

* It is optimal to begin treatment 1 session per week 2 months in advance to optimize hormonal balance and regulate any menstrual disorders such as heavy or light periods, scanty cervical fluid, delayed ovulation, etc.
* 1-2 treatments per week during the injectable medications to enhance follicle growth, egg health, and endometrial lining
* 1 treatment the day before or day of the IUI
* 1 treatment 5-7 days after ovulation to relax the uterus during implantation time.

Women taking injectable medications are monitored with ultrasounds and blood work during the follicular phase of the cycle. This information will help the acupuncturist determine the exact timing and extent of the treatments necessary to enhance the cycle. If the woman is responding poorly to the medications, more acupuncture treatments can help boost follicular growth, likewise if the cycle is going well, fewer treatments may be advised. The acupuncture during this kind of cycle will also help to neutralize any side effects of the medications and promote deep relaxation.

**In Vitro Fertilization Cycle**

* It is optimal to begin treatment 1 session per week 2 months in advance to optimize hormonal balance and regulate any menstrual disorders such as heavy or light periods, scanty cervical fluid, delayed ovulation, etc.
* Depending on the cycle schedule determined by your reproductive endocrinologist, 1 session per week will be advised during birth control pills and/or the Lupron portion of the cycle
* 1-2 treatments per week during the stimulation medications to enhance follicle growth, egg health and endometrial lining as well as promote general relaxation.
* Treatments during and after egg retrieval are generally not necessary except in cases of elevated discomfort or stress
* Treatment the day before or the day of the embryo transfer to eliminate fallopian tube and uterine contractions and promote general relaxation. On-site treatment at the fertility clinic both before and after the embryo transfer has been shown in a study to improve success rates by 40%. These treatments were designed for a study and it is not necessarily true that the acupuncture must be directly before and after transfer to have the desired effect. The benefits of acupuncture last for many hours and days beyond the treatment time and sessions the day before or the day of appear to be just as beneficial. Your acupuncturist can discuss what the best choice is for your case.
* 1 treatment 5-7 days after the transfer to relax the uterus during implantation time.

It is advised that the couple or woman meet with an acupuncturist as early as 3 months before the start of the IVF cycle. Discussion of fertility history and current needs will determine an individual treatment plan for each patient. Listed above is a general description of the kinds and types of treatments available to patients and may not be appropriate for every woman.

**Frozen Embryo Transfer Cycle**

* It is optimal to begin treatment 1 session per week 2 months in advance to optimize hormonal balance and regulate any menstrual disorders such as heavy or light periods, scanty cervical fluid, delayed ovulation, etc.
* 1 treatment per week during the estrogen phase to enhance hormonal balance and endometrial lining and also promote general relaxation
* Treatment the day before or the day of the embryo transfer to eliminate fallopian tube and uterine contractions and promote general relaxation. On-site treatment at the fertility clinic both before and after the embryo transfer has been shown in a study to improve success rates by 40%. These treatments were designed for a study and it is not necessarily true that the acupuncture must be directly before and after transfer to have the desired effect. The benefits of acupuncture last for many hours and days beyond the treatment time and sessions the day before or the day of appear to be just as beneficial. Your acupuncturist can discuss what the best choice is for your case.
* 1 treatment 5-7 days after the transfer to relax the uterus during implantation time.

Frozen embryo transfer cycles are generally less stressful on the body but much more stressful emotionally. Acupuncture can continue to support the quality of the endometrial lining and overall hormonal balance. These positive effects are in part accomplished by keeping stress within lower limits. Increasing endorphins during acupuncture neutralizes the negative effects created by cortisol and other stress hormones. By promoting relaxation on both emotional and physiologic levels, you are giving your body the best opportunity to naturally take over and nourish a pregnancy.

**Natural Fertility Treatment**

Acupuncture can be used as a natural approach to fertility without the use of western medical interventions. An acupuncture treatment plan will be designed after an initial consultation. A normal course of treatment will span 3-6 months and will focus on correcting any ovulatory imbalances or reproductive issues such as cysts, fibroids or endometriosis. Herbal medicines are generally used to assist with this process. It is preferable to treat both partners, as most fertility issues are not found in just the male or female. Male fertility issues such as low count, low motility or poor morphology can be treated through diet and lifestyle modifications as well as regular acupuncture and herbal medicines to balance hormones and boost fertility.