

Acupuncture with Assisted Reproductive Technology

About 15% of couples who want a baby resort to some form of assisted conception. "Unexplained infertility" affects as many as 26% of infertile couples in Britain.

Assisted reproductive technology (ART) is a range of techniques used to manipulate eggs and sperm. It includes most commonly: drug treatments to stimulate egg production, surgical removal of eggs and re-implantation of embryos, in-vitro fertilisation as well as regimes for freezing and screening sperm and embryos.

Assisted conception is not an "easy way out". It can put a strain on finances, relationships and emotions, and couples often take a gamble when undergoing treatment as success rates vary between 10% and 39%.

Acupuncture and complementary medicine can make a marked impact on assisted conception's success rates. One landmark study has found that IVF success rates went up by more than 60% when acupuncture was used before and after embryo transfer.

Acupuncture is beneficial in all aspects of ART, including:

- Reducing stress
- Improving sperm quality
- Regulating ovulation
- Increasing blood flow to the uterus, and improving endometrial receptivity, thereby impacting implantation
- Acupuncture supports development of quality and quantity of follicles
- Acupuncture addresses estrogen levels that fail to come down as a result of Lupron / Synarel. Estrogen clearing in Traditional Chinese Medicine can be accomplished through clearing the liver channel, and takes just a few treatments

Hilary Haynes treats both male and female partners undergoing assisted conception. All treatment is individually tailored. Typical treatment for a woman undergoing IVF would begin with a naturopathic consultation followed by:

- one treatment per week at down regulation (for long IVF protocols)
- two treatments a week during stimulation
- one treatment between egg retrieval and transfer
to aid healing of ovaries and enrich endometrial lining in anticipation of implantation
- one treatment within 25 minutes either side of embryo transfer
- one treatment at implantation time (between four and six days after embryo transfer)