



the acupuncture IVF support clinic

Preparing To Conceive

Did you know that it takes four and a half months from the time the follicle in your ovary starts to develop to the moment where the egg it contains is mature enough for ovulation?

There's a lot you can do during this time, which will influence the development of that egg.

Diet: Optimal nutrition provides an optimal ovarian environment for the eggs during the critical maturation process. Chinese medicine recommends having a wide variety of tasty fresh foods in season eaten in a relaxed manner. It is also important to heed more pragmatic advice such as, eat plenty of protein, including vegetable protein, and fresh fruit and vegetables – organic where possible. Meat, poultry or fish that has been farmed with the use of growth promoters and hormones should be avoided as should processed foods.

Your Chinese medicine practitioner will tell you if there are particular foods you should avoid or increase according to your constitution

Supplements: In keeping with maximising nutrition available to the developing eggs and ensuring you are in good shape for pregnancy, it is advisable to take supplements which include Folic acid and other B vitamins, Vitamins C and D, omega 3 fatty acids, antioxidants such as CoQ10 and minerals such as zinc, iron and iodine. Please speak to your practitioner about dosage.

Caffeine: High caffeine intake is associated with infertility and increased miscarriage rates. Even moderate coffee drinking (1 – 3 per day) can reduce fertility. Try to limit your intake to no more than 1 tea per day and 1 or 2 coffees per week.

Alcohol: Women metabolise alcohol much less efficiently than men and there is evidence to suggest that even moderate drinking (5 or fewer glasses a week) can delay conception. Try to save alcohol for those special occasions and then have one glass savoured slowly!

Dairy: For women who have no difficulty digesting dairy products, regular rather than low fat products have been shown to benefit fertility.

Weight: A BMI of 20 – 25 is associated with higher pregnancy and lower miscarriage rates than those above or below this range. If you are overweight losing a few kilos now could make a big difference to your ability to conceive naturally or with IVF.

Talk to us about how diet, acupuncture and herbs can help to control your appetite and improve your metabolism. If you are underweight increase your intake of calorie dense protein and low GI carbohydrates.

Smoking delays conception and causes early menopause. It reduces live birth rates in IVF cycles and makes the uterus less receptive to embryo implantation. Marijuana is toxic to the developing egg and can interfere with ovulation. So you need to stop now! Acupuncture can help you with withdrawal symptoms.

Exercise: Doing regular exercise, something you enjoy, is beneficial. It increases energy, lifts mood, helps you sleep and helps to control weight. However exercising too much (4+ hours per week) has been shown to reduce IVF success rates.

During the first part of pregnancy you need to exercise with care so take the opportunity now to increase your fitness.

Stress: Increased stress is associated with reduced numbers of follicles and poorer outcomes in IVF cycles. And even minor stressors can cause ovulation failure.

Regular acupuncture is effective in reducing stress hormones, relieving anxiety and depression and regulating ovulation.

Sleep: More than 40% of adults get less than 7 hours sleep a night and this has adverse effects on metabolism and weight control. Getting enough sleep is essential to maintain optimal hormonal regulation.

Fumes and toxic chemicals: Chemicals in the environment like pesticides, insecticides, household cleaners and industry by-products have been shown to reduce egg viability, deplete follicle numbers and reduce IVF success rates. As much as possible reduce your exposure to fumes and chemicals.

Chinese Medicine: Acupuncture and Chinese herbs have a proven record with improving fertility, both in China over many hundreds of years and more recently in the west. Speak to one of our practitioners about an appropriate treatment plan for your circumstances.