



the acupuncture IVF support clinic

A Positive Pregnancy Test

During these first few weeks of pregnancy it is important to pace yourself and not overwork or get overtired. Your body is undergoing enormous changes as it adapts to being pregnant. This can be quite draining for the duration of the first trimester so save any demanding jobs til after week 12.

Exercise

Movement is good, but high impact or tiring exercise or strain on the abdomen or lower back is not. Take gentle walks, rather than running. Be careful with forward bends, sit-ups, back bends or anything that compresses the abdomen or lower back. Try and not stand for extended periods of time.

Don't overheat and don't lift heavy weights. After 18 weeks follow a moderate exercise programme to help keep weight under control and to be fit for labour.

Lower back or abdomen pain

If you feel any lower back pain or weakness, rest. Abdominal discomfort is not uncommon in early pregnancy, but please contact us if it becomes strong, or has a bearing down nature.

Bleeding

Spotting is not uncommon in early pregnancy but do contact us if it becomes heavier than spotting or is accompanied by abdomen or lower back pain.

Fumes

It is important to avoid fumes, so please don't plan to repaint or renovate the house at this time.

Also avoid fumes like petrol, nail varnish and remover and household cleaning products.

Cold

In Chinese medicine, successful establishment of pregnancy requires a “warm womb” with a plentiful supply of “blood and qi”. For this reason we advise against swimming, getting chilled around the lower back or abdomen, and the consumption of icy foods and drinks (at least until your pregnancy is well established).

Heat

On the other hand it is important not to get overheated, so don't have very hot showers, baths and saunas. Its also best not to put very hot heat packs or hot water bottles on your abdomen. Gently warming ones are OK, and a good idea if you feel chilled in the abdomen or lower back.

Sex

If you have a history of infertility and/or miscarriage most Chinese medicine doctors would caution against sex for the first few weeks.

The same applies to vaginal ultrasounds – try to leave off having this investigation until 3 weeks after receiving a positive pregnancy test ie “7 weeks pregnant” by which time a heart beat is easy to detect.

Food

Eat nourishing plain foods, choosing fresh foods in season that are pleasing to the palate and the eye, and make sure to maintain good protein intake.

Avoid alcohol and minimise coffee. Rich or heavily spiced foods or foods like raw fish which might increase your risk of diarrhoea should also be avoided. If you experience pregnancy nausea, frequent snacks and avoiding rich foods will help, so will acupuncture.

Flying

Some women are nervous of flying after transfer or in early pregnancy. However there is no evidence to date to show any increase in miscarriage or in abnormalities of babies who's mums flew in early pregnancy.

Acupuncture

In women with a history of infertility or miscarriage we usually recommend weekly acupuncture up until week 10 or 12. This reduces the risk of miscarriage (but will not prevent it if the embryo is abnormal) and reduces anxiety.