



## What are IUI and IVF?

At our practice we have specialized training to support women entering into Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART). Common ART procedures are IUI and IVF. IVF is the process of fertilization by manually combining an egg and sperm in a laboratory dish, and then transferring the embryo to the uterus. IUI is the process of placing washed sperm into the uterine cavity. Using a thin plastic catheter, concentrated sperm is gently placed high in the cavity, moving the sperm sample past the potential barrier of the cervical mucus and getting a higher concentration of motile sperm much closer to the egg.



A 2002 German study (commonly referred to as the "Paulus" study) found that **using acupuncture and IVF achieved a 42% clinical pregnancy rate in the test group, compared to 26% in the control group that did not receive acupuncture.**

This study involved giving acupuncture for just one day, shortly before and after the transfer of embryos. **In our clinical experience this rate increases to at least 60% with broader support of both herbal medicine and acupuncture in the months preceding IUI or IVF.** In addition, both of these modalities can significantly **reduce the risk of miscarriage** by supporting the female during her entire pregnancy.

## Acupuncture and ART

A large number of patients who have tried IUI and IVF and were unsuccessful have soon become pregnant after Chinese medicine treatments. In clinical observation the ultrasound shows that after acupuncture, the color of a women's ovaries change from cloudy to bright and clear. The follicles usually double in number, the lining of the uterus becomes thicker, and the number of embryos increases significantly. Patients experience less side effects from the Western drugs and feel more at ease and happy. For male patients, it is our experience that the semen quality significantly improves and the sperm number greatly increases.

In brief, Chinese medicine can help to improve the success rate of IU and IVF in a number of ways:

- Improve the function of the ovaries to produce better quality eggs
- Regulate the hormones to produce a larger number of follicles
- Increase blood flow to the uterus and increase the thickness of the uterine lining
- Relax the patient and decrease their stress

- Prevent the uterus from contracting
- Lessen the side effects of drugs used in IVF
- Strengthen the immune system and supports autoimmune conditions
- Improve semen to create better quality and quantity of embryos
- Decrease chances of miscarriage

*Reference: Acupuncture and IVF by Lifang Liang, O.M.D, PH.D, L.AC*

### **Course of Treatment**

According to the most recent research, clients who have had more than 8 acupuncture visits prior to embryo transfer, have higher success rates with IVF. We recommend starting weekly treatments (ideally) 2 months before transfer and then twice weekly treatments once stimulation meds begin.

### **What the Studies Say**

[Acupuncture and In Vitro Fertilization: Does the Number of Treatments Impact Reproductive Outcomes?](#)

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[Influence of acupuncture on the pregnancy rate in patients who undergo assisted reproduction therapy](#)

Wolfgang E. Paulus, M.D.,[a] Mingmin Zhang, M.D.,[b] Erwin Strehler, M.D.,[a] Imam El-Danasouri, Ph.D.,[a] and Karl Sterzik, M.D.[a] 2002

[Acupuncture in IVF Linked to Lower Miscarriage and Ectopic Rates](#)

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[Acupuncture: A Cure for Infertility?](#)

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