

Other pregnancy problems

Treatment can be used to relieve a variety of conditions including;

- Anaemia
- Anxiety
- Constipation
- Carpal Tunnel syndrome
- Heartburn
- Haemorrhoids and Vulval varices
- Insomnia
- Oedema
- Headaches
- Sinus problems
- Threatened miscarriage
- Tiredness and exhaustion
- Thrush

Postnatal care

Acupuncture has techniques to promote recovery; these include "mother warming" treatments that can be given by a partner, advice on diet and the use of specific strengthening and blood building herbs. Other conditions that can be helped by acupuncture include; insufficient lactation, wound healing and scar tissue repair, postnatal depression and urinary incontinence.

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4 <http://www.nzgg.org.nz/guidelines/0074/caesarean>

5 Cardini F, Weixin H. (1998). "Moxibustion for correction of breech presentation". Journal American Medical Association. 280:1580-1584.

6 Kubista E, Kucera H. (1974). On the use of acupuncture in the preparation for delivery, Geburtshilfe Perinatol; 178(3):224-9.

7 Betts D Lenox S (2006) Acupuncture For Prebirth Treatment: An Observational Study of its use in Midwifery practice. Medical Acupuncture. Vo 17 No 3

8 Gaudernack L, Forbord S, Hole E. (2007) Acupuncture administered after spontaneous rupture of membranes at term significantly reduces the length of birth and use of oxytocin . A randomised controlled trial. Midwifery Digest. Vol 17, No 2.

9 Hantoushzadeh S. Alhousseini N. Lebaschi A. (2007) The effects of Acupuncture during Labour on Nulliparous Women: A Randomised Controlled trial. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. 47:26-30

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Your local Practitioner

Acupuncture offering a safe, effective and drug free treatment option during pregnancy.



Acupuncture and Pregnancy

Pregnancy

For over 3000 years Traditional Chinese Medicine has promoted specialised treatment for women in pregnancy care and postpartum recovery. Today this care is becoming increasingly popular and used by acupuncturists and specially trained midwives in countries such as Denmark, England, France, Germany, Holland, Norway, Sweden, and New Zealand where acupuncture is available in specialised antenatal clinics and maternity hospitals. Pregnancy, childbirth and postnatal recovery are viewed in traditional Chinese medicine as a window of opportunity to enhance the woman's well being. Conversely if adequate care is not taken the resulting problems may continue long after the birth. Value is therefore placed on promoting preventive care to strengthen the mother and baby as well as dealing with problems as they occur during pregnancy. Acupuncture can be used in a variety of ways to promote foetal and maternal health.

Nausea during pregnancy

Acupuncture is often very effective in reducing both the severity and incidence of nausea and vomiting during pregnancy. Research from Australia (1) highlighted that women receiving traditional acupuncture (where points were chosen according to an individual diagnosis) experienced faster relief when compared to those groups receiving routine prescribed points or "sham" acupuncture. This research also looked at the successful pregnancy outcomes for the women involved, concluding that "acupuncture is a safe and effective treatment for women who experience nausea and dry retching in early pregnancy" (2)

Muscular – Skeletal Pain

Back pain, rib pain, sciatica and symphysis pubis pain are common in pregnancy and can all be markedly reduced with acupuncture. Research from Sweden (3) concluded that when compared to physiotherapy, acupuncture was the treatment of choice for symphysis pubis and sacroiliac pain.

Breech and Posterior Babies

The New Zealand Evidence Based practice guidelines for care of women with Breech presentation (4) recommends that moxibustion may be offered to women from 33 weeks gestation. This follows research from Italy (5) that demonstrated moxibustion can have a significant effect in helping to turn breech babies. Ideally treatment is at 34 –35 weeks, but can still be useful when used later in the pregnancy. Techniques can also help babies that are not in the optimal position prior to birth, such as those in a posterior position

Hypertension

Acupuncture can have an important role in assisting to reduce high blood pressure, especially if treatment is commenced early when hypertension is first noted. The effectiveness of acupuncture will be reflected in the improved blood pressure readings and blood tests used by midwives and specialists to detect possible complications. As hypertension has the potential to escalate quickly, ongoing medical monitoring remains essential throughout pregnancy.

Labour Preparation

Three to four weeks prior to the due date a treatment to prepare the pelvis and cervix can be commenced. This is followed by one treatment per week until labour begins. Research from Germany (6) indicated the potential for a more efficient active stage of labour. A New Zealand study with midwives (7) indicated a reduction in women requiring medical intervention, including medical induction and caesarean section.

Induction

Acupuncture can provide a gentle inducement to labour if the baby is overdue and can be an effective alternative to a medical induction. Research from Norway (8) on the use of acupuncture for women with premature rupture of membranes (PROM) concluded that "Ideally acupuncture treatment should be offered to all women with PROM and other women who wish to use this method to facilitate their birth and keep it normal"

Pain relief during Labour

Acupuncture offers drug free alternatives for pain relief during labour (9) Acupressure provides similar results (10) with the advantage that support people can use it during labour. A free booklet on using acupressure can be downloaded at <http://acupuncture.rhizome.net.nz>