

***Acupuncture and FET: Holistic Options for Increasing Fertility***

*Webinar Q&A April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015*

*Panelist: Dr. Rita F. Stanford, DAOM, Dipl. C.H., L.Ac. Doctor of Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine*

**Q: “What is the reference to the 50% Increase in success, the highest I have found is 30% chance?”**

**A:** “You can find the study from the [American Society of Reproductive Medicine](#). There are a few other studies completed, but this is the one that we have found to be referenced the most by both doctors and acupuncturists.”

**Q: “About the diet you mentioned early in your presentation, is there a website that defines warm, cool, cold foods?”**

**A:** “This should be easy to find [online](#) however, a lot of it is usually taught in school. [Bob Flaws](#), who I trained under for my TCM and gynecology and obstetrics classes has written many books on the subject. Specifically [Arisal of the Clear](#) may be a good book to look into.

In Chinese medicine the idea of the diet is that we are trying to keep the spleen working. So if you have a tendency toward creating a lot of phlegm, then you want to stay away from mucus forming foods. During the pregnancy women tend to produce more phlegm, because the baby is taking so much of their Qi and Blood. When the Qi and Blood isn't available to the spleen it has trouble digesting. The baby is getting the Qi and blood instead of the woman, and when the spleen becomes weak, phlegm happens.

Cold foods disengage the Qi mechanism and makes digestion harder. In terms of really hot foods, that can lead to stagnation, which in Chinese medicine means cramping and pain. You want the baby to have neutral foods, and in the US a lot of our foods are very warming. Chocolate, alcohol, carbohydrates, or spicy foods are all considered warming. Also, a lot of people do not drink enough water; most of us are dehydrated! The idea of Ellen Cutler who is the BioSET originator, says that you should have half of your body weight in ounces of water. If you weigh 120lbs then you should have 60oz. of water every day. So it's a very good idea to stay hydrated. If you tend to be hot natured and you're eating all these hot foods, then that can cause dehydration and therefore loss of blood. We depend on body fluids to make blood. So that's the indication for the different kinds of food. Bob Flaws has written many books related to pregnancy and also diet.”

**Q: “Dr. Rita, how available you for consultations, only in person or by phone too?”**

**A:** “I’m very available, you can easily contact me and find our more on my [website](#), I’m happy to talk to people on the phone. However, I don’t make consultations over the phone. In a consultation I need to take your pulse, look at the tongue, plus a 6 page questionnaire that will help me find your syndrome/our diagnosis. We look at all of your symptoms to find out how they fit in a pattern. So say you have insomnia, and digestive problems, and pain in your leg, we make a cohesive diagnosis based on all of the symptoms put together. Not just isolated, like if you go to the doctor you need to go to all of these specialists nowadays to get to the right person. Gastroenterologist’s deal with digestion, neurologist’s deal with nerve pain and headaches. Instead we try to take all of your symptoms and put them into a pattern to see your diagnosis, it is important to see you in person.

You can also find a [qualified acupuncturist](#) in the area you live in. You may find that there are few people who do Bio-SET allergy elimination, which is a specialty outside of being an acupuncturist. I graduated in 1994 and didn’t learn allergy elimination until 1999. I used to see my teacher, for treatment for 8 years, and had horrible digestion. It wasn’t until I did allergy elimination that my digestion really improved. Now, I don’t have any digestive problems.

Some people don’t notice that they have digestion problems because they don’t feel nauseous or bloated or have indigestion, they may just feel tired. I had one patient I treated for alcoholism, and he didn’t know he had allergies. In my mind alcoholism relates to a sugar imbalance. He noticed after I treated him that he had more enthusiasm for life, he felt more mentally clear. People can have allergies and just don’t know it, or are having poor metabolism, such as my patient. But once they get treated, they feel different, better.”

**Q: “I understand you can assist a woman using a medicated cycle for their FET, but can acupuncture also be used for a Natural Cycle when receiving a FET?”**

**A:** “Absolutely, acupuncture can help regulate a natural cycle to prepare for the FET. A lot of patients have too much bleeding, or cramping, all kinds of issues related to their menstrual cycle. Acupuncture is extremely effective in regulating those kinds of problems, and helping with energy problems or those issues they might have. It helps to prepare them for pregnancy, if a woman is already exhausted going into the pregnancy then she will only be more exhausted once she is pregnant. This won’t be helpful to the baby. Remember your giving all that Qi and blood to the baby during those nine months. So we can begin by preparing the woman, and help her to relax, while regulating her body.

Something that might be interesting to men, I have a male patient who is 56 years old and a lot of his friends have problem with impotency. He swears that his treatment has enabled him to continue having a good sexual life.

Acupuncture at certain points work on that part of your body, so you can certainly open up the energy and blood flow to the uterus and ovaries as well as fallopian tubes to help the implantation process in general. I have also worked on women with endometriosis, as well as resolving ovarian cysts that also might be causing problems with pregnancy.”

**Q: “Why do you think celiac/gluten intolerance is more, or seems to be more prevalent today?”**

**A:** “Well actually, if you look back in history there wasn’t such a thing as food allergies before we began processing foods. So part of it is that gluten itself wasn’t always available to people, they began using it more when they started processing bread. I think it’s just an overexposure. Plus what I mentioned about the use of hormone and antibiotics in our food chain, food coloring/additives, and pesticides. If you don’t buy organic strawberries you’re getting something like 54 carcinogenic pesticides in your strawberries. So I think it is related to the food processing and overexposure, people are eating out more and getting exposed to hormones and antibiotics.

In my opinion, antibiotics are the worst thing that ever happened to our food chain. It kills off all the good flora in your colon, and then you begin mal-digesting and mal-absorption. There’s something called leaky gut syndrome, which means that a food goes into your system and it irritates it. It causes this inflammation, which then causes the villi of the colon to open. This is how allergies are created, the actual food leaks into the blood system and the body builds an antigen antibody complex around that food because it doesn’t belong in the blood system. For example when I got a \$300 blood test to show I had a gluten allergy, it was in my blood, it didn’t belong in my blood it was undigested there. So that’s why the body builds this reaction to it.

I personally think it is because of antibiotics, that this happens. If you look at the Center for Disease Control, supposedly 90% of Americans have candida, which is a yeast overgrowth due to an overexposure to antibiotics. We believe in the allergy elimination practice that this leads to autoimmune disease. I think that is the real culprit, that people are getting overexposed to these things that we didn’t have before processed foods. 80% of antibiotics manufactured in the US are given to animals, and not because they are sick. They are in such crowded conditions that they’re eating each other’s poop, and in terrible conditions. Now they are even giving it to fish. It’s a mess, our whole food chain, I really encourage people to stay away from those kinds of foods.”

**Q: “What would you recommend for a lot of blood clots/tissues during menstruation? I have had one chemical miscarriage.”**

**A:** “We have herbs for that and acupuncture. What does acupuncture really do? It moves Qi and blood, and it can supplement Qi and blood. So in the case of clotting, we have herbs, Such as a great formula called [cramp bark](#). If the blood is clotting, there is stagnation, meaning the Qi and blood is not moving through the body correctly. One of the best things Acupuncture does is circulates Qi and blood, there by getting rid of blood clotting over time. What I do with my patients that have that issue is I put them on herbs. Three days before their menstrual cycle they start this and take it up until they stop bleeding, and it helps to rid of the cramps and blood clotting in general.”

**Q: “How do you think Obesity is related to a Luteal Phase Defect?”**

**A:** “If you are looking back to the spleen, which in Chinese Medicine is a very important organ. It’s responsible for digestion, it’s responsible for making Qi and blood, and helps the immune system as well. People with weakened spleens tend to catch the cold or flu easily. So what’s happening in obesity is that person’s digestion is not great, and what they are doing is creating phlegm. In Chinese Medicine that phlegm will get hung up on the ovaries and fallopian tubes and will cause secretions and form little cysts and masses. So in my estimation, the person who is obese tends to have a spleen deficiency and tend to be hungry a lot. Or they could have a thyroid condition, there are different reasons for obesity. In my estimation why it would cause infertility problems or problems with implantation, is because of the phlegm conglomeration that leads to gaining weight and excess fat as well as conglomeration around the reproductive organs.”