

# The Ancient Art of Infertility Treatment

When it comes to getting pregnant, old world techniques may be just what today's high-tech doctors will order.

By [Colette Bouchez](#)

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Reviewed by [Brunilda Nazario, MD](#)

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If headlines are any indication of what's hot and what's not, it's easy to believe that [infertility treatment](#) is strictly a modern day science, made possible solely through the courtesy of high-tech medicine.

But as good as modern science is, many couples trying to [get pregnant](#) find themselves turning to an age-old treatment for help -- one so steeped in tradition it's about as far from life in the 21st century as one can get.

That treatment is [acupuncture](#), and today, even high-tech reproductive specialists are looking to the somewhat mysterious world of Chinese medicine to help those fertility patients for whom western science alone is not quite enough.

"Most of our patients are referred to us by reproductive medicine specialists -- they are usually women who have failed one or usually more than one attempt at IVF ([in vitro fertilization](#)), and their doctor is looking for something to help implement the success of their treatment, over and above what the protocols alone can accomplish," says Raymond Chang, MD, the medical director of Meridian Medical and a classically trained acupuncturist as well as western-trained medical doctor.

[Acupuncture](#) is an ancient Chinese medicine treatment that relies on the painless but strategic placement of tiny needles into a "grid-like" pattern that spans the body, from head to toe. The needles are used to stimulate certain key "energy points" believed to regulate spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical balance. And, for many women, it's often just what the doctor ordered.

"It can allow you to cross the line from [infertile](#) to fertile by helping your body function more efficiently, which in turn allows other, more modern reproductive treatments, like IVF, to also work more efficiently," says James Dillard, MD, assistant clinical professor, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, and clinical adviser to Columbia's Rosenthal Center for [Complementary and Alternative Medicine](#).

Indeed, in a study of 160 women, published April 2002 in the reproductive journal *Fertility and Sterility*, a group of German researchers found that adding acupuncture to the traditional IVF treatment protocols substantially increased [pregnancy](#) success.