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Acupuncture is part of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) with herbal medicine, nutrition and Tai Chi/Qi Gong. In this holistic way of looking, not only the symptoms of a complaint are treated, but also the underlying cause.

That is why Chinese medicine is ideally associated with Western medicine. The underlying theory is that in addition to the vascular and nervous system known in the West, a network of invisible pathways, meridians, runs through the body. You can actually think of these meridians more as paths along which the energy runs. Each organ has its own meridian; the energy (Qi) of the organs circulates through the meridians.

All meridians are connected. Specific "points" (acupuncture points) are located on these meridians; there the circulation of energy can be influenced well and complaints can be treated by means of needles or massage.

# Preparing for pregnancy

This period is important to bring your body into optimal condition in terms of energy. Complaints that you have at that time will be treated. An important goal is to create a "warm womb". We use acupuncture and herbs, but nutritional and lifestyle advice is just as important.

#### Pregnancy

Not only does a lot change in your life, but also in your body. Your body suddenly has to take care of another person, which can leave you feeling both physically and emotionally out of balance. Acupuncture can also help you to experience less or no problems with, for example, nausea, fatigue or fluid retention and emotional complaints such as stress and anxiety. Acupuncture and herbs can help prevent an impending miscarriage in some situations.

# Preparing for childbirth

A study at a large German university a number of years ago showed that the dilation phase is shorter and fewer complications arise during childbirth if a preparatory acupuncture treatment is carried out weekly in the last 4 weeks before the due date. Acupuncture has also proven to be effective with "being overdue".

### Breech presentation

If it appears that the baby is breech, treatment with moxa (mugwort) and acupuncture can help the baby turn. An acupuncture point on the little toe is heated with the moxa cigar. If necessary, the point can be punctured first. It is best to start this treatment from week 33 or 34 until the baby has turned. We teach you how to apply the moxa treatment at home.

# Recovery after childbirth

In the West, no specific attention is paid to this period. But in the TCM's view, this phase already lays the foundation for a possible subsequent pregnancy and also for a harmonious transition.

Acupuncture, herbs and the right nutrition can contribute to a good and speedy recovery after childbirth.

Of course: a pregnancy & childbirth is not a disease, but costs a lot of energy and it is best to rebuild it carefully. Breastfeeding can also be stimulated or a (threatening) breast infection can be treated. And a (threatening) postpartum depression is also eligible for acupuncture treatment and/or herbal therapy.

# IUI / IVF / ICSI

Both men and women can be well guided with TCM during a pregnancy process.

An acupuncture treatment around the transfer alone results in an increase in the number of pregnancies.

Problems with the production or mobility of sperm can also be favorably influenced.

#### Reimbursement

Many health insurers include acupuncture in the supplementary package. Most health insurers do set a maximum number of treatments or the amount that they reimburse per calendar year.

You can see a list of reimbursed insurers via the website of the Dutch Association for Acupuncture (www.acupunctuur.nl).

Arina Marsman and Iza van Geelen are both affiliated with the NVA.

