

Hello,

Welcome to the first edition of the Comox Valley Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine Newsletter. It is my hope that this quarterly newsletter will give you an opportunity to have your questions answered regarding Traditional Chinese medicine and learn some helpful tips for healthy living.

## **Topic of the Month**

- 1. Endometriosis**
- 2. Diagnosis**
- 3. Treatment Protocol**
- 4. Lifestyle suggestions**
- 5. Dietary suggestions**
- 6. Question of the month**
- 7. What's New?**

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### **Endometriosis**

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Endometriosis is defined as the presence of endometrial tissue somewhere in the endometrial cavity but outside the uterus. Endometriosis is diagnosed by laparoscopy and is commonly found on the back of the uterus, on the fallopian tubes, bowel or bladder, or a cyst inside the ovaries (chocolate cyst) or around the ovaries.

Some common symptoms of endometriosis are

- dark clotted menstrual blood
- abdominal pain and cramping
- painful intercourse
- spotting before period
- masses or nodules felt on palpation
- infertility
- if charting basal body temperature you may find that the temperature does not drop very much with menstruation or if the temperature does drop it will rise after day 2 or 3.

Although these are the common symptoms some women have absolutely no symptoms of endometriosis and the diagnosis is made through a laparoscopy, other times severe pain and clotting may be associated with only a small amount of endometriosis.

In traditional Chinese medicine a treatment plan is formed to help resolve the endometriosis, often including acupuncture, herbal medicine, and dietary and lifestyle suggestions to promote blood flow and strengthen any underlying imbalances.

In Chinese medicine endometriosis is diagnosed as **blood stasis** if there are symptoms such as dark clotted menstrual blood and abdominal pain and masses. Accompanying symptoms may include spider veins, ashen complexion, ovarian pain with ovulation, and painful breast lumps.

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## Diagnosis

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It is also important to treat the underlying cause of the endometriosis, the reason for the blood stasis,

Some of these include

- **Liver qi stagnation** where emotional issues and stress cause the energy and blood in the body to stagnate. Often accompanying symptoms would be irritability, PMS, breast distension, menstrual headaches.
- **Spleen qi deficiency** may also be involved in causing the formation of blood stasis or phlegm. Symptoms of spleen deficiency include a heavy bearing down sensation in the abdomen, premenstrual spotting, heavy bleeding, abdominal bloating, sweet cravings, loose stools, fatigue, and hemorrhoids.
- **Kidney yang deficiency** may also be a factor in endometriosis, causing cysts and dampness to accumulate in the body. Symptoms of kidney yang deficiency include frequent clear urination, nighttime urination, lower back pain, tinnitus, copious clear cervical fluid, cold hands and feet, feeling colder than those around you.

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## Treatment Protocol

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**Acupuncture-** weekly acupuncture treatments are suggested to promote blood flow to the reproductive organs and regulate hormonal levels.

**Herbal medicine-** a personalized formula is prescribed depending on the individual diagnosis as well as the time of the menstrual cycle. Different formulas may be given at different times of the month throughout a woman's cycle, this is especially important if a woman is trying to conceive. These personalized herbal formulas regulate hormone levels and help remove any obstructions from the reproductive organs.

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### **Lifestyle suggestions**

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- castor oil packs can be used to stimulate blood flow before and during menstruation
- deep breathing and relaxation techniques to promote blood flow through the reproductive system
- abdominal massage, rubbing the abdomen in a clockwise motion for a few minutes daily from menstruation to ovulation.
- hot water bottle or heating pad applied to abdomen daily
- do not use tampons during menstruation
- refrain from intercourse during menstruation

**Dietary suggestions** are as seen below.

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### **Chinese Dietary Therapy**

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#### **Foods to promote blood flow and prevent blood stagnation**

- chestnut, walnuts
- crab, white fish
- chives, scallion, onion, mustard leaf, eggplant, dark green leafy vegetables, brussels sprouts, beets, turnips, cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, carrots.
- hawthorn berries, peaches, lemons, limes, grapes, raspberries
- seaweed, spirulina

#### **What to Avoid**

- Do not overeat or eat late at night
- Limit greasy, fatty foods
- Limit stimulants such as sugar, coffee, alcohol

- Eat organically whenever possible
- Avoid cold food and drink, better to have room temperature beverages and lightly cooked foods
- Dairy

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## **Question of the Month**

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**I am undergoing in vitro fertilization in two months when is the best time to come for acupuncture?**

As soon as possible.

Traditional Chinese medicine is a form of medicine that seeks to rebalance the body and allow the body to produce its own correct balance of hormones in order to regulate menstruation and allow a healthy pregnancy and baby to be born. This can take time as often underlying imbalances and menstrual irregularities have been going on for years.

The best time to start acupuncture treatments is at least three months prior to the procedure to have the maximum effects on regulating the menstrual cycle, decreasing stress, improving egg quality, improving blood flow to the reproductive organs and improving overall health to sustain a pregnancy.

If you are already closer to your procedure date do not worry as acupuncture can help. A German study published in 2001 has shown that only two twenty five minute acupuncture treatments, one before and one after embryo transfer increased pregnancy rates by 42%. This study has since been replicated many times by others. It is thought that acupuncture decreases uterine contractions during transfer to allow for implantation to occur.

Traditional Chinese medicine can help prepare for pregnancy whether your procedure is tomorrow or six months from now.

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**What's new at the Comox Valley Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine Clinic?**

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I am on my way to New York City to intern with Mike Berkley founder of the Berkley Center for Reproductive Wellness and Women's Health in Manhattan. I will be attending a two day seminar at the Pacific College of Oriental Medicine given by Mike Berkley as well as observing Mike Berkley and his fertility treatments in his extremely busy Reproductive Wellness Center in Manhattan.

Mike Berkley is the first Chinese medicine doctor to have opened up a clinic treating fertility in New York City and has designed his own Berkley Method of infertility treatment including acupuncture, herbal medicine, dietary and lifestyle suggestions. I am very excited about this opportunity and look forward to incorporating this new information in my practice treating infertility.

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### **About Comox Valley Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine Clinic**

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Michelle Hughes is the founder of Comox Valley Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine in Courtenay, British Columbia. Michelle is a Doctor of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Registered Acupuncturist with the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Michelle has a special interest in women's health and has trained with some of North Americas foremost experts in reproductive health, gynecology and obstetrics. Michelle is a member of the Infertility Awareness Association of Canada and the Traditional Chinese Medicine Association of British Columbia and is a trained labour support person.

Michelle believes in providing safe effective care in a supportive environment.

If you would like to learn more about Chinese medicine visit  
[www.comoxvalleyacupuncture.com](http://www.comoxvalleyacupuncture.com) or call 250-898-7547