

Needle craft



Acupuncturist **Helena Barker** graduated from The College of Naturopathic Medicine with a Diploma in Acupuncture and Naturopathy. She is a member of the Acupuncture Foundation Professional Association of Ireland (AFPA) and practices in The Body Therapy Ireland Clinic in Navan and The Ananda Centre in Slane, both Co Meath. She explains how acupuncture works

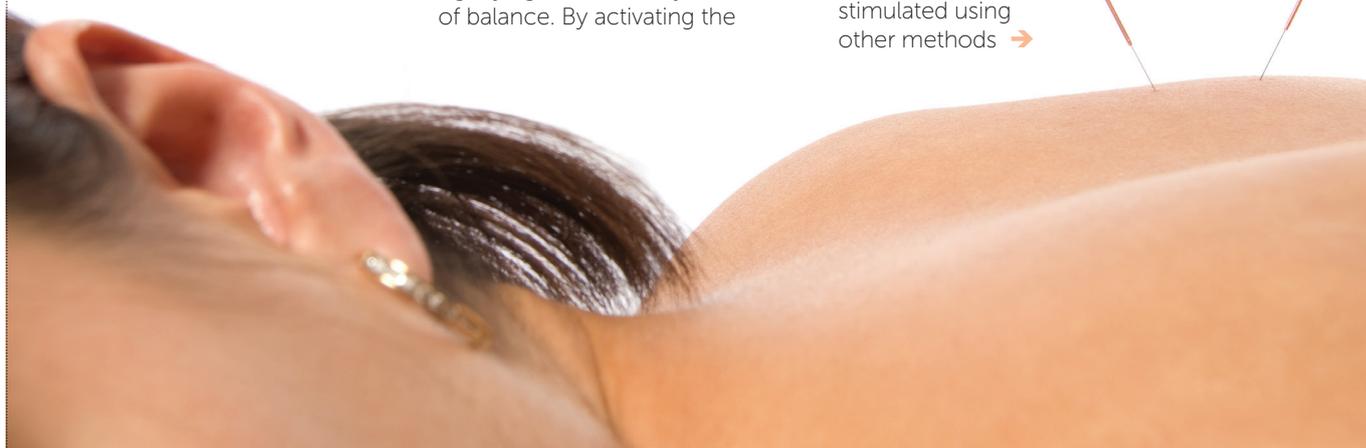
ACUPUNCTURE is part of a system of health care called Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Traditional Chinese Medicine is one of the oldest surviving medical systems in the world. It originated in China over 2000 years ago and is recognised by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to be the second most widely used system of health care alongside western medicine. Acupuncture works to restore and maintain the body's natural

balance by stimulating its own healing response. It aims to treat the whole person, so it can be effective for a wide range of problems – physical, mental and emotional.

The underlying principle behind TCM is that Qi or vital energy flows through our body in pathways or channels known as meridians. Pain or illness occurs when this Qi or vital energy is blocked and is unable to flow freely within these meridians, signifying that the body is out of balance. By activating the

circulation of Qi, acupuncture allows the body to heal itself and addresses the cause of a health disorder as well as relieving symptoms.

Acupuncture is a safe treatment which involves the insertion of fine, sterile, disposable needles into specific acupuncture points to clear energy blockages and encourages the normal flow of Qi through the body. Acupuncture points may also be stimulated using other methods →





CASE CONFIDENTIAL

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ASK AWAY

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of TCM including cupping and massage.

Acupuncture can help with a wide range of health issues including fertility and gynaecological issues, pain management, stress and anxiety, sports injuries, digestive disorders, cardiovascular health, insomnia, hormonal imbalance, IVF support, headaches and migraines, respiratory and immunity, general wellbeing and much more.

Many patients seek acupuncture help for fertility issues. Couples will receive acupuncture for general Qi and blood circulation help before conceiving naturally and by assisted methods such as IVF. Greater numbers of male patients who want to try and improve the quality of their semen have

acupuncture too.

Combining acupuncture with naturopathy is very effective in helping men with semen issues. Naturopathy is a medical system incorporating a natural philosophy and approach to health and healing. Naturopathic treatments may include nutrition, diet, lifestyle advice, tissue salts, flower remedies, herbal medicine, acupuncture and supplementation to support and promote the body's own healing and regulating mechanisms. Other remedies may be prescribed such as body work, exercise or relaxation techniques that will help support your body, mind and spirit.

Naturopathy works well alongside acupuncture as you are targeting the whole body to heal, create balance and wellness.

Acupuncture helped us get pregnant

'John' is 38 and from Co Meath

My partner and I had been trying for a baby for about two years with no success and we were referred to the National Fertility Centre, the HARI unit, in the Rotunda Hospital in Dublin.

Ideally before trying IUI or IVF they like sperm to have a 60% motility rate, but when mine was tested it was only 30%. They recommended I make some lifestyle changes and that I see an acupuncturist. I was willing to try anything that would help.

A friend recommended Helena Barker and I went for a session once a week for three months. Helena recommended I take nutrition supplements such as zinc and chromium and I changed my diet to something closer to vegan. I also gave up smoking, cut back on my alcohol intake and did more exercise.

Before my first acupuncture session I was a bit sceptical and nervous about the idea of needles going into me. Admittedly one or two points were sensitive, but overall it wasn't bad at all. After the treatment I was completely exhausted and I slept really well. I felt tired but brilliant.

After three months of acupuncture my motility test came in at 48% which was a dramatic improvement and in January my partner and I had our first IVF cycle and she became pregnant straight away, so we are thrilled.

My first consultancy with Helena which lasted 90 minutes when she assessed my needs and asked lots of questions was €60 and after that it was €40 for a one-hour session. I still go to acupuncture with Helena once a month and I found that it can really help other issues too such as a hurt knee which really improved.

I find acupuncture is great because there are no medicines, chemicals or doctors – it is the total opposite of the IVF process which can be very medical.

Our baby is due in October and we are thrilled. I put a lot of our success down to acupuncture.

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