

Nourishing Fertility with Chinese Medicine

By Dr. Charlene Chan, ND

In Chinese Medicine, it is said that every newborn has a 'Pre-Heaven Qi' or 'Pre-Conception Energy' given by the biological parents at the time of conception. This Qi (pronounced chee) or Energy serves as the health reserve for babies in their future development. So the healthier the parents are now, the more Pre-Heaven Qi they'll be able to pass on to the child. Here are a few simple guidelines that will benefit your health and contribute to your unborn baby's Pre-Heaven Qi.

It has been well established that early and appropriate prenatal supplementation is associated with reduced risk of pre-term delivery, miscarriage, and low birth weight. Folic acid is a well researched nutrient in prenatal care. Adequate folic acid before and during pregnancy helps prevent neural tube defects in the fetus. In addition to this essential vitamin, there may be other factors to consider depending on your situation.

Women with a history of oral contraceptive use have an increased need for B vitamins, zinc, and folic acid. Men also benefit from nutrients such as vitamin B12 and zinc which help improve sperm health. Docosahexanoic acid or DHA, a specific type of omega 3 fatty acid is also essential for proper brain development of the fetus.

If you are trying to get pregnant and it is taking longer than planned, it is important to understand your individual cycle, assess the timing of ovulation, and identify any possible underlying causes. Conditions such as anovulation (lack of ovulation), endometriosis, fibroids, polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) and poor sperm health all affect fertility. Chronic stress, obesity, age, and hormonal imbalances are also factors to consider.

Hormone tests through blood and saliva are often recommended by naturopathic physicians to identify potential imbalances. For example, progesterone deficiency is clinically associated with PMS (premenstrual syndrome), perimenopause, and anovulation. Increased FSH (follicle stimulating hormone) is often an indicator of poor ovarian progesterone reserves. Specific herbs, nutrients, and acupuncture may be used appropriately to modulate these hormones responsible for optimal fertility.

It is important to work with your naturopathic doctor to understand how your hormone levels are affecting your fertility and general health. By providing your body with adequate nourishment you will be able to maximize the vital energy that is passed on to form your newborn's Pre-Heaven Qi. 

Dr. Charlene Chan is a naturopathic physician who works with many women and couples to achieve healthy pregnancies naturally and in conjunction with fertility specialists for people using IVF/IUIs. For more information, please visit www.drcharlenechan.com

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