

# Treating Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) with Acupuncture & Chinese Medicine

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**Q:** I was diagnosed with PCOS several years ago and have been taking a variety of medicines, including Metformin, to treat my symptoms. This has been somewhat successful, but I have side effects from the medication and I would like to try something more natural. Can acupuncture help?

**A:** Thank you for your question. Yes, Chinese medicine and acupuncture is used successfully to treat a wide variety of menstrual/hormonal, endocrine and fertility issues. Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is an increasingly common problem affecting approximately 1 in 15 women and can cause fertility problems, menstrual issues as well as complex health issues such as diabetes.

Chinese Medicine treats patterns, not conditions. PCOS is often related to dampness/phlegm possibly with heat. Where this is coming from, however, is different for each patient and a proper diagnosis is essential for proper treatment. Kidney Yang deficiency is probably the most common pattern, but other Kidney patterns, Liver Stagnation and Spleen Qi Deficiency are also possibilities. In other words, not every woman with PCOS will receive the same treatment because the root imbalance may not be the same.

From a Chinese medicine perspective, the most common manifestation of PCOS is dampness or phlegm. The symptoms for dampness or phlegm include

- feeling tired and sluggish after a meal
- fibrocystic breasts (tender breasts sometimes with palpable lumps)
- menstrual blood containing stringy tissue or mucous
- recurrent yeast infections or vaginal itching
- fertility issues
- difficulty maintaining a healthy weight
- achy joints, worse with movement
- cystic or pustular acne
- urgent or foul-smelling bowel movements
- the tongue may look wet, slimy or have a thick coating on the surface



Using a combination of acupuncture, herbs, and diet the symptoms listed above will start to decrease. Hormones will become more balanced, women that were not ovulating will begin to notice signs of ovulation, including increased fertile vaginal discharge and an elevation in their basal body temperature.

**Q:** How does acupuncture treatment differ from the treatment I am currently getting from my OB/GYN?

**A:** The current conventional medical treatments for women with PCOS are prescription medications, surgery, and lifestyle changes. Associated problems with current western therapies are the cost, risk of multiple pregnancies, undesirable side effects, and inconsistent effectiveness.

Acupuncture therapy increases blood flow to the ovaries, reduces the number of ovarian cysts, controls blood sugar, reduces cortisol levels and assists in weight loss. Non-randomized acupuncture study participants had virtually no adverse side effects and no increased risk of multiple pregnancies per gestation as compared to the conventional medical treatment study participants.

**Q:** How many sessions will it take for my period to regulate?

**A:** This is impossible to say without having the chance to physically inspect you and discuss your entire medical history. Generally speaking, however, it will take 3-6 months as a minimum.

**Q:** I have been unable to conceive a child as a result of the PCOS and irregular periods, can acupuncture help me?

**A:** For women with PCOS, treatment should be started well before they will try to achieve pregnancy. PCOS is a complicated syndrome that needs time to be able to treat. Starting treatment early in life will increase the likelihood you will have the family you desire.

**Q:** How long before I can get pregnant?

**A:** I usually recommend that women that have had years of ovulation dysfunction wait for 3 months before attempting to conceive a child. The first three months of treatment we work to regulate your menstrual cycle and increase the viability and quality of the eggs. After three months, the egg will be much healthier and the chances of having a healthy pregnancy and healthy child goes up substantially. I know if you have been trying to get pregnant for a while, it is frustrating to wait the three months, but as a parent to be you want your child to have the best health possible and starting with a healthy egg is one of the best things you can do for your child.

**Q:** Is there any research on the effectiveness of acupuncture and PCOS?

**A:** Yes, there has been some research in China studying the effectiveness of acupuncture compared to Metformin in treating symptoms associated with PCOS. Researchers from the First Affiliated Hospital of Guangzhou Medical College recently conducted a study examining the effects of acupuncture on PCOS symptoms/causes vs. the western medical treatment, Metformin.

Researchers found that the acupuncture group and the Metformin group both had positive changes in all viable measures. They concluded, however, that the acupuncture group showed "considerable advantages over the Metformin group in terms of reduced Body Mass Index and Waist to Hip Ratio and increases in menstrual frequency" with few adverse effects.

Acupuncture works to restore the entire sympathetic nervous system to health and balance. The result is a normalizing of the hormonal system directly tied to ovulation and reproduction. 2,500 years of medical history can't be wrong. Call now to schedule an appointment, 239-260-4566 or go to our website, [www.AcupunctureSolutionsOnline.com](http://www.AcupunctureSolutionsOnline.com) to schedule online or to get more information.

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