



Acupuncture & Holistic Health Associates
At The Bayshore Town Center
500 W. Silver Spring Drive, Suite K-205
Milwaukee, WI 53217
Phone: (414) 332-8888
www.milwaukeeacu.com

October, 2011
AHHA
Newsletter

Oriental Medicine and Women's Reproductive Health

At the risk of generating some controversy, let's first establish reproductive system function in a *very healthy* woman's body:

- **Timing:** apparently a healthy woman will tend to menstruate with the new moon and ovulate during the full moon. One can imagine if the moon phases can affect the oceans' tides, it can certainly affect body fluids.
- **Duration:** a healthy woman's menstrual flow will normally last 3-5 days.
- **Color:** a healthy woman will experience healthy, red menstrual flow without abnormalities such as purple, pink, pale, brown, or black colors.
- **Amount:** a healthy woman will experience moderate menstrual flow upon onset, a slight increase in flow at midpoint, followed by a slight decrease in volume just before the end of flow. There would not be particularly heavy flow at any point.
- **Other factors:** the rest of the month, including the days leading up to menstruation, should pass without pain, digestive issues or other symptoms.
- **Menopause:** a healthy woman will experience the above earlier in life, leading to a gentle, brief transition with minimal symptoms just before or after age 49. Ancient physicians in China discovered that a woman's development occurs in seven year cycles beginning at birth. This transition at the seventh of those cycles (typically around 49 years old), commonly referred to as menopause, in the case of a very healthy woman, would not include symptoms such as extreme hot flashes, emotional fluctuations, sleeping disturbances and the like. Unfortunately, exposure to mental stressors, physical trauma and various chemicals (including hormones in food, tap water and birth control medications-ironically enough) tend to decrease reproductive system function, potentially leading to severe symptoms that many women experience during menopause.

It can be very upsetting to some when they find out what a normal menstrual cycle and menopause could be as it is relatively uncommon in our culture. Do not take offense; the intention is to not upset, rather to simply outline what occurs normally at these stages of life. If symptoms other than those outlined above arise, it simply indicates a breakdown in one or more of the body's systems. Thankfully, the body knows how to heal itself and Acupuncturists have been helping bodies do that for literally thousands of years. When a woman's body becomes healthy, the menstrual cycle often normalizes and menopause may become a relatively effortless transition that passes somewhat quickly without significant burdensome symptoms.

If a woman experiences problematic reproductive system symptoms, she may find it helpful to understand the following four phases of a woman's reproductive cycle and the strategies taken with Acupuncture and/or Chinese Herbal Medicine to create balance:

- **Phase 1 - Menstrual Phase (the week of menstruation):** In this phase, it is important to regulate the menses and allow for proper shedding of the uterine lining. Treatment may be utilized to achieve this effect and eliminate and/or prevent improper circulation in the lower abdomen.
- **Phase 2 - Follicular Phase (the week following the last day of menstruation):** During this phase, the key strategies are to nourish Kidney/Adrenal function and generate increased blood volume, both of which are depleted as a result of menstruation. It is notable for those attempting to conceive that during this stage it is essential to fortify the body, ensuring healthy conception.
- **Phase 3 - Ovulatory Phase (week of ovulation):** The primary treatment plan during the ovulatory phase is to help eggs mature and to promote ovulation. Certain Chinese herbs and/or Acupuncture points enhance the surge of luteinizing hormone (LH), which then stimulates ovulation.
- **Phase 4 - Luteal Phase (the week before the onset of menstruation):** The focus during this phase is to regulate Liver function and treat any possible pre-menstrual syndrome (PMS) and ensure proper circulation to and from the Liver and reproductive system.

Ultimately, in the normalizing of the above phases, it is critical to consider what has been known for hundreds of years in China: the Kidney/Adrenal system produces the raw materials necessary to produce hormones, such as estrogen and progesterone that control reproductive organ function. Therefore, one can see how Kidney/Adrenal system is often, if not always, involved in reproductive system imbalances.

Healthfully,

Curry D. Chaudoir, Diplomate in Acupuncture

Note: Nothing in this document is intended as a substitute for your doctor's diagnosis and/or treatment. This statement has not been evaluated by the FDA.