

**BOTTOM LINE'S**

# **Breakthroughs in Drug-Free Healing**

**Bill Gottlieb**


**Thousands of the  
Best Science-Proven  
Natural Remedies to  
Curb, Cure and  
Prevent Common  
Ailments and  
Serious Conditions**



Khim Choong, MS, LAc, RN, an acupuncturist specializing in infertility, at Los Gatos Oriental Medicine, in California.

If that's the case, she suggests a series of twice-weekly acupuncture treatments, in the four weeks before the transfer. "This will help increase the thickness of the uterine lining, increasing the likelihood of a successful pregnancy," says Choong.

She also recommends that an infertile woman work with a practitioner of TCM to improve her health comprehensively, not only through acupuncture, but also herbal treatments, diet and other lifestyle changes. "I've had patients who were considered to be 'low responders,' producing few eggs when their ovaries are stimulated—and even these women can conceive when they commit to getting themselves healthier," says Choong.

 To find an acupuncturist near you, visit the Web site of the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, [www.nccaom.org](http://www.nccaom.org), where you can search for certified acupuncturists by area code or zip code.

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## THE BABY SUPPLEMENT

"Vitamins and minerals play a major role in fertility function, and using nutritional supplements as a first step in treatment could improve key factors essential to fertility," says Lynn Westphal, MD, of the Stanford Fertility and Reproductive Medicine Center.

"Herbs have been used for the treatment of infertility since at least two hundred AD, and herbal products also have the potential to add to existing treatment options," she adds.

The challenge for physicians and their patients, she says, has been a lack of scientific evidence about *which* nutrients and herbs are

the most effective...what levels are safe...and what combinations are safe.

Dr. Westphal may have answered some of those questions.

### |||► **Breakthrough Study**

Based on scientific studies on various herbs and nutrients for fertility, Dr. Westphal and her colleagues formulated a supplement containing the herb chasteberry (*Vitex agnus-castus*), green tea catechins, the amino acid L-arginine, vitamins B-6, B-12, C, E and folate, and the minerals iron, magnesium, zinc and selenium.

Next, they studied 93 women, aged 24 to 42, who had tried unsuccessfully to conceive for six to 36 months, dividing them into two groups. For three months, one group took the supplement and the other a placebo.

**Result:** Thirty-two percent (17 of 53) of the women in the supplement group became pregnant, compared to 10% in the placebo group (four of 40).


"It surprised us when nutritional and herbal supplementation worked as well as it did," says Dr. Westphal. "Supplementation may play an important role in optimizing fertility health, leading to improved conception rates, and could provide an effective alternative or addition to conventional fertility therapies, particularly in cases of menstrual irregularity or unexplained infertility."

**How it works:** Dr. Westphal explains—the herb chasteberry supports good hormone balance and normal ovulation by increasing levels of luteinizing hormone and progesterone...the amino acid L-arginine helps improve circulation to the reproductive organs, which may help the development of eggs and also embryo implantation...the antioxidants vitamin E, selenium and green tea catechins reduce oxidative damage to the reproductive organs...studies have shown that vitamins B-6, B-12 and the minerals iron,

zinc and magnesium can improve female fertility...and folic acid assists in the reduction of neural tube birth defects.

**i** The doctors studied Fertility Blend.

**Suggested intake:** Follow the dosage recommendation on the label—three capsules a day.

 You can purchase FertilityBlend and read more about the supplement at [www.fertilityblend.com](http://www.fertilityblend.com). The Daily Wellness Company, 1946 Young Street, Suite 390, Honolulu, HI 96826 (866-222-9862); e-mail [dwcservice@dailywellness.com](mailto:dwcservice@dailywellness.com).

## LOW-CARB DIET FOR PCOS

Ten percent of American women have polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS)—and it's the number one cause of infertility. And no wonder.

Periods are irregular or stop...your body produces high levels of *androgens*, male hormones such as testosterone, with the outward signs of coarse hair on the face and chest, male pattern baldness and acne...the egg-producing ovaries are prickly with tiny cysts...50% of women with PCOS are overweight (itself a risk factor for infertility)...and most suffer from blood sugar problems.

In fact, *insulin resistance*—the refusal of muscle and fat cells to heed the call of the hormone that tells them to absorb blood sugar—is a common feature of the disease. High insulin levels trigger the production of more androgens, and block the production of *sex hormone binding globulin*, which helps keep testosterone in check.

That's why doctors at the Duke University Medical Center in Durham, NC, decided to see if a very low-carbohydrate diet might help

regulate blood sugar and insulin levels, thereby easing the symptoms of PCOS.

### Breakthrough Study

The researchers studied five women with PCOS. All of them were overweight, with a body mass index of 27 or higher. (For example, a 5'4" woman with a BMI of 27 would weigh 157 pounds.)

At an initial group meeting, the women were instructed how and why to eat a very low-carbohydrate diet, limiting their carbohydrate intake to less than 20 grams a day. They continued to meet for one hour every other week for the next six months, receiving further instruction and encouragement.

**Results:** After six months, the women lost an average of 12% of their weight...their testosterone dropped by 22%...their insulin levels dropped by 54% (a sign of less insulin resistance)...and their blood pressure dropped significantly. Also, there was a greater balance in two of the hormones that regulate menstruation.

The symptoms of PCOS also decreased, with more regular periods, less body hair and more balanced emotions.

Best of all, two of the 11 women became pregnant—"despite previous infertility problems," says John C. Mavropoulos, MPH, of the Duke University Medical Center.

"The results were quite dramatic, he says. "This magnitude of weight loss, with the resolution of PCOS symptoms, is a desirable effect in any intervention."

**What to do:** The study participants followed the "Induction Phase" of the Atkins Diet. *The diet includes...*

- **Animal foods.** Unlimited consumption of animal foods (meat, chicken, turkey, other fowl, fish, shellfish).

- **Cheese.** Four ounces of prepared and two ounces of fresh cheeses a day.