

Acupuncturist gives hope to mothers-to-be



Photo by Natasha Morris



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When people think of acupuncture they think of needles. When infertile women think of acupuncture they think of hope.

In this case, **Hope Peek**.

A licensed acupuncturist and co-founder of **Charlotte Acupuncture and Wellness Center** in Charlotte, North Carolina, Peek began studying **Traditional Chinese Medicine** to treat severe menstrual cramps. However, it wasn't until she learned that a close friend had been struggling with infertility that she was inspired to focus on reproductive health.

"For most people this is the most difficult challenge they've met thus far," says Peek, "and so I knew that Chinese medicine had

so much to offer to help women and men through the fertility journey."

Acupuncture is a healing technique that balances the flow of energy throughout the body using ultrathin needles, and has been practiced throughout China and other Asian countries for over 2,000 years, according to the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine.

Peek, who's treated over 1,000 clients since 2006, says the majority of them contact her after enduring countless and unsuccessful trials of fertility drugs, hormone injections and in vitro fertilization cycles.

"Most of them are depressed and sad," she says. "There's grief and anger as well. Every month there's this trying and hoping and then their period comes."

Peek administers fertility treatment starting with two weekly hour-long sessions to get the body in balance then reduces it to one weekly hour-long session for regulation. Treatment, which includes a customized herbal formula for support, typically lasts from three to six months depending on the follicle growth.

Peek also recommends that clients continue treatment throughout their pregnancy particularly during the first trimester when they're most likely to experience hormonal changes through morning sickness and fatigue as well as after birth to help with lactation and postpartum depression.

And as more women learn about the benefits of reproductive acupuncture, Peek says the more proactive they're becoming in managing their fertility. "There are others that are like I already know I'm getting married later in life and I want to get the support. I want to make sure I'm doing well."

For Peek, acupuncture is more than just her practice. It's her passion. And for every woman like her friend who shows up at her doorstep weary and discouraged, she aspires to give them another option, a sense of control, and most importantly a glimmer of what her first name aptly suggests: Hope.