

Let's Talk About PCOS

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome

*What it is,
and what
your doctor
can do.*

ACUPUNCTURE

*An ancient treatment offers new
comfort and hope.*

SART RESULTS

*The Center continues to demonstrate
success. 13,000 babies can attest!*

FACEBOOK LIVE!

*Our new "Lunchtime Live With The
Center" is becoming a huge success.*

OUR VIDEO LIBRARY

*From physician Q&A's and patient
testimonials, to debunking myths and more.*

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome

It's a fairly common syndrome. In fact, 5-10% of women have it. And, it can contribute to infertility. But here's the thing ... not everyone has the same symptoms. So, to determine whether you have Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (or PCOS), your doctor has to follow the clues to look for a combination of problems.

YOU NEED TWO OF THE THREE

To be diagnosed with PCOS, you need to exhibit two of the following three symptoms:

- 1) A chronic lack of ovulation (anovulation)
- 2) A chronically high level of the hormone testosterone (hyperandrogenism)
- 3) Multiple small cysts on your ovaries (polycystic)

So, how can your doctor determine whether you have PCOS?

UNCOVERING DIFFERENT CONDITIONS REQUIRES DIFFERENT METHODS

To determine whether you have “two of the three,” your doctor will need to do a variety of things. First, you'll need to have a physical exam and go over your menstrual history with your doctor. You'll also need to have a transvaginal ultrasound. And, you'll need to have some blood work done. These three diagnostic methods will help determine whether you have the conditions that add up to PCOS.

Even though not everyone has the same symptoms, there are some commonalities among women who are diagnosed with PCOS. For example, women with PCOS typically report having irregular menstrual periods. They may skip a period, or go a long time between periods. Other common signs include being obese, having increased hair growth, or having problems with excessive acne.

Ultrasounds typically reveal that women with PCOS have enlarged ovaries with a number of small cysts. High levels of blood sugar, cholesterol and testosterone (the “male hormone”) are also commonly found in the blood tests of women with PCOS.

ARE THERE RISKS TO HAVING PCOS?

Absolutely. Besides making it difficult to get pregnant, there are health risks associated with irregular ovulation. Studies reveal that over 50% of women with PCOS will develop diabetes (or pre-diabetes) before they're 40. Women with PCOS are at greater risk for developing high blood pressure, having increased levels of “bad” cholesterol (LDL) and lower levels of “good” cholesterol (HDL), as well as having a heart attack. Women with PCOS are also at risk for sleep apnea, anxiety and depression.

The hormonal irregularities associated with PCOS can also put patients at increased risk for developing endometrial cancer (the endometrium is the lining of the womb). When menstruation and ovulation are irregular, women still produce the hormone estrogen. But, they do

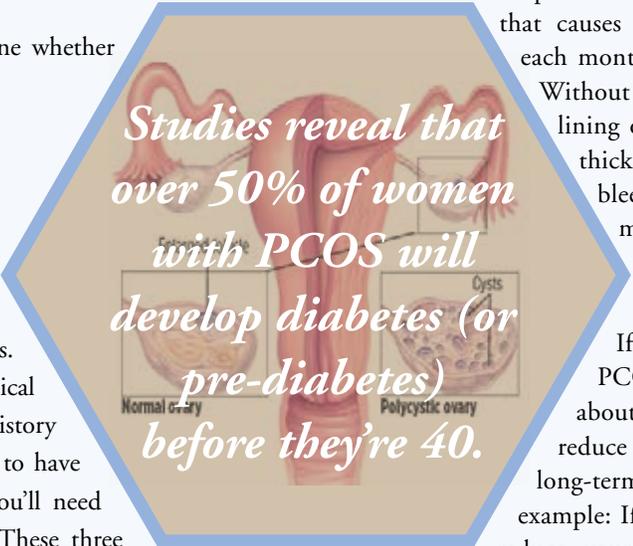
not produce progesterone, the hormone that causes the endometrium to “shed” each month creating a woman's period.

Without progesterone, over time the lining of the womb can become too thick, causing heavy or irregular bleeding. If the lining grows too much, the patient can develop endometrial hyperplasia, or eventually, cancer.

If you're diagnosed with PCOS, talk with your doctor about steps you can take to reduce your chances of developing long-term health problems. For example: If you eat right, exercise more, reduce your weight and quit smoking, you can give your body a better chance of developing a more regular ovulation pattern.

CAN YOU BE TREATED FOR INFERTILITY IF YOU HAVE PCOS?

You can. In fact, our physicians will offer you a variety of treatments that will maximize your chances of getting pregnant. In addition to the lifestyle changes mentioned above, our specialists might recommend oral medications that induce ovulation, or fertility medicines that are taken by injection. In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) may be the best option for you. Whatever form your treatment takes, you can be assured that we will “follow the clues,” work with you, explore all the options, monitor you carefully, and give you the best chance of realizing your dream.



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An Ancient Treatment Offers New Comfort and Hope

Acupuncture can be a prickly topic. Pictures of the procedure can make it look scary, it looks like it could be painful (though it's not!) and some simply shrug it off as one of those "New Age trends." However, there are many studies that show this ancient Eastern medical procedure can assist in the treatment of many ailments, including infertility.

Acupuncture, one of the 8 branches of ancient Chinese medicine, involves the strategic (and painless!) placement of tiny needles to certain key "energy points" in the body. These points are believed to regulate spiritual, mental, emotional and physical balance. In a text dating from around 300 BCE, acupuncture was described as:



- Treating the root cause of an illness (or imbalance) by addressing the whole body
- Supporting the innate power of the body to heal, self-regulate and achieve homeostasis
- Removing blockages in the body's energy system, which cause pain and disease

How does it work?

The basis of acupuncture is that it helps activate the flow of your Qi (or vital energy), as well as blood circulation. This flow can be interrupted (or blocked) by stress, overwork, emotion, poor diet, trauma, and other factors. Recent studies show that, in addition to increased blood flow, acupuncture also helps support the immune system, causes the release of endorphins (natural pain blockers) and helps regulate key hormones.

Treatment doesn't just involve using needles. Practitioners also offer dietary guidance, herbal supplements, and suggestions for daily lifestyle changes. Your treatment program will be based on an intensive look at your particular situation. The idea is that the health of the unborn child is dictated by the health of the man (sperm) and the woman (egg) at the time of conception.

How does acupuncture enhance fertility?

For many women, having acupuncture both before and after embryo transfer has been shown to help with their fertility in many ways. It's not just for women, either. The fertility of men can also be enhanced. Acupuncture can support fertility by:

- Preparing the body for natural conception
- Improving sperm motility, quantity and quality
- Improving and increasing blood flow to the uterine artery

- Improving egg quality
- Regulating menstrual cycles
- Regulating hormone levels
- Calming the nervous system and reducing stress
- Increasing the chances of embryo implantation (when done on the day of transfer)
- Improving pregnancy rates in IVF

Is acupuncture right for you?

The best way to decide if acupuncture is right for you is to talk with your physician and our acupuncturist. As noted, we'll do an extensive review of your (and your partner's) health, lifestyle, stress levels and more before any treatment is recommended. As always, our goal is to give you the greatest chance possible to achieve your dream of bringing a healthy baby into the world.

Helen BetGivargis

Licensed Acupuncturist

"I am an acupuncturist here at the Center. My role is to provide acupuncture treatment and fertility coaching to my patients who are going through various stages of their fertility process and their journey.

As a former embryologist, I really enjoyed what I was doing. But as I learned more and more, I became really passionate about alternative medicine and ancient Chinese medical techniques.



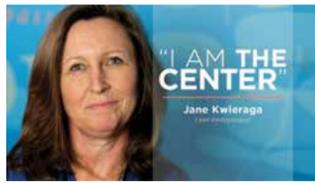
What I love most about my role is that I can offer these techniques to my patients ... conveniently right here at the Center ... to support their process and enhance their fertility outcome.

The experiences that really stand out for me are those times when I provide acupuncture treatment to my patients on the day of their embryo transfer ... both pre- and post-transfer ... and I can watch them fall into a state of deep calm. That's both rewarding for me and beneficial to the success of their treatment."

NEW TO OUR VIDEO LIBRARY



If you have a question about infertility and IVF we've probably already asked and answered it for you. From physician Q&As and patient testimonials, to debunking myths and offering insight, our video library is a constantly growing resource for individuals and couples looking for information. We also like to feature our employees so you can get to know us just a little bit better.



Check out all our videos at uconnfertility.com/vidcolibrary or our YouTube channel

SARTresults

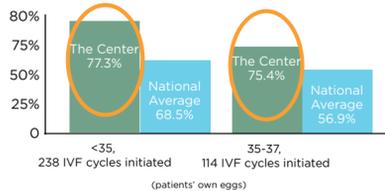
Choosing a quality Center is paramount to having successful outcomes. Not all Centers provide the same infertility treatments, offer the same approach or have the same results. Important criteria used to evaluate a Center's success include its:

- experience level or volume
- live birth rate, and
- triplet or higher birth rate

We're pleased that the Center continues to demonstrate success: Not only in the percent of live births achieved, but also in our ability to lessen the potential for pregnancies with twins, triplets or more. With over 13,000 babies born since our inception, we continue to lead in both the region and the nation.

To learn more about our success rates and those of other programs, please visit the Society for Assisted Reproductive Technologies website (www.sart.org). Click on IVF Success. A comparison of clinic success rates may not be meaningful because patient medical characteristics and treatment approaches may vary from clinic to clinic.

Live Birth Rate per New Patient



75%+ success
rate of IVF patients, up to age 37, becoming pregnant within the first year of IVF treatment

Source: Society for Advanced Reproductive Services (SART) 2017 Final Annual Report <https://rb.gy/dv7mgj>

Cumulative Outcome Per Egg Retrieval



85% singleton births
As a result of expert clinical management such as eSET the overwhelming majority of our IVF births are singleton deliveries. This results in more healthy mom's and babies.

Cycles Starts	<35	35-37	38-40	41-42	>42
Live Births	356	228	246	143	77
Singletons	59.8%	48.2%	25.2%	13.3%	6.5%
	87.8%	80.9%	79%	90%	100%

Source: Society for Advanced Reproductive Services (SART) 2017 Final Annual Report <https://rb.gy/dv7mgj>

Likelihood to Recommend Clinical Provider and Practice



97% satisfied
Patients will receive great clinical care and have a fantastic experience. Survey says!

Source: Press Ganey Q1&2 2020 Patient Satisfaction Survey



Experts generally agree that the quality of a fertility lab is vital to creating an embryo that has the greatest chance of becoming a healthy baby. In fact, many say the lab is the most important consideration. Unfortunately, the quality of labs varies widely. If, as some experts suggest, having a "good lab" can double your chance of success, how do you know whether you've chosen the right one?

Considering the delicate nature and the importance of the procedures involved, the skill and experience of the embryologists are critical factors to success. You will want to work with a team, like ours, that has extensive experience. But what about the facility itself?

AN IVF LAB CAN BE CRITICAL TO YOUR SUCCESS

When you're handling the most basic components of a new life, the IVF environment is critically important. Embryos are highly sensitive to temperature changes, contaminants and more. That's why we've created a pristine lab environment that mimics the natural uterine environment as closely as possible.

Any fertility clinic can claim it has a great lab. But, if you really want to know whether we're right for you, take a look at our success rates. Over more than 35 years of practice, we've been responsible for the births of over 13,000 babies. We're one of the most successful in the nation. With exceptional care and support, plus rigorous quality control and a state-of-the-art lab, we'll provide you with the greatest chance possible of bringing a healthy new baby into the world.



Wall Of Hope Families



Dr. Schmidt, Michelle Raszcewski and her children Olivia and JD.

Dr. David Schmidt Receives Hope After Loss Compassionate Care Award

This award recognizes exemplary care given to someone who has experienced pregnancy or infant loss. Dr. Schmidt was nominated by Michelle Raszcewski. Hope After Loss helps those find the inspiration of hope by providing connections, comfort and care.

LUNCHTIME Live! with the Center

Tune in each Wednesday at 12:30 for a Facebook Live chat about all things fertility. Interested in learning more about PCOS? Have questions on the latest genetic testing options? Or maybe you've wanted to try acupuncture but aren't sure about when is the right time during treatment to go. Like us on Facebook and check out our list of upcoming conversations.

UPCOMING LUNCHTIME LIVE TOPICS

- » WHEN DO I NEED TO SEE A SPECIALIST?
- » NEW PATIENT VISITS
- » FERTILITY MASSAGE
- » LGBTQ CARE AT THE CENTER
- » EGG FREEZING
- » FERTILITY SURGERY
- » DIAGNOSTIC TESTING
- » PGT
- » BLASTOCYST VS. DAY 3
- » COPING
- » FINANCIAL COUNSELING

Can't make a session? You can always view the conversation afterwards on our YouTube channel or in our website Video Library.

Scan this QR code with your smartphone and connect directly to our website.



Our Patient's Share Their Joy

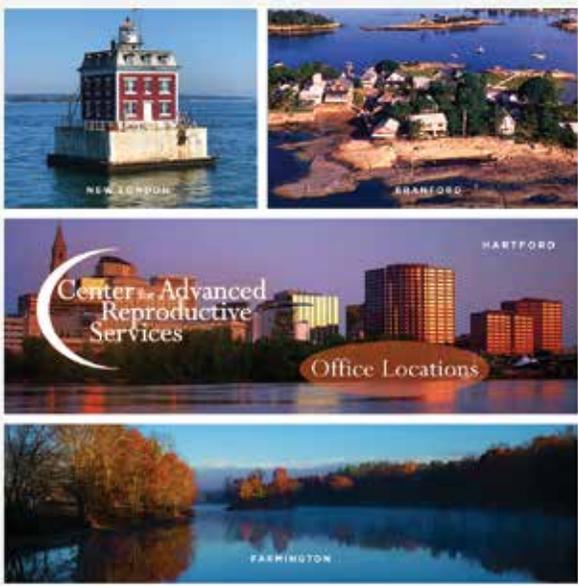


IT'S TIME FOR AN INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL CHECKUP

Jump start your fertility planning with an insurance and financial checkup. Some good news: because infertility is a medical disease, many diagnostic tests and treatments may be covered. And if your current insurance plan doesn't cover the procedures you may need, open enrollment is a great time to investigate if there are other plans that may work better for you. Plus, you still have time to maximize potential savings. If you've met your deductible, you may want to schedule tests before the end of the year to be ready to go in the new year. If you have a FSA, HSA or HRA, check the balances and decide if you should be spending some of the money before year end. Or, take advantage of potential tax savings opportunities to pay for your next year's expenses. Talk to one of our financial specialists for help in finding the right next step for you.

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) UPDATES

As we monitor global and local developments related to the coronavirus (Covid-19), our priority at the Center remains the health and safety of our patients and staff, as well as providing our patients with a positive experience. The Covid-19 pandemic has changed many things including the way we practice fertility medicine, but one thing that has not changed is our commitment to helping our patients build families. Our website and social media channels regularly update on our protocols and procedures. We recommend patients take advantage of our Virtual Fertility Visit as an opportunity to start their program in a safe and comfortable manner.



An academic affiliate of UCONN School of Medicine

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www.uconnfertility.com
844.HOPEIVF

A wonderful poem thanks to our yoga and Fertility massage therapist, Carissa Spada, LMT.

You may not be able
to bury your hardest times,
Forgetting that they happened,
or change them down the line,
but because those times were hard,
they'll endure the moments when
you realize you are strong enough
to stand on top of them.
So wear your strongest posture now,
and see your hardest times
as more than just the times you fell
but a range of mountains
you learned to climb.

by Morgan Harper Nichols



CORNER

CARISSA'S



OUR STORY: The Center is an academic affiliate of the UConn School of Medicine. We are a specialized program of the division of Reproductive Endocrinology and Fertility and one of the largest and most successful IVF programs in the Northeast. We offer one of less than 40 postgraduate fellowships for Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility (REI) in the United States. Due to our national reputation as a "Center of Excellence," acceptance to one of our fellowship positions is very competitive. Fellows also participate in ongoing clinical research. This has resulted in several first author publications and national conference presentations for our fellows. Over the past three years, the fellows have presented 18 abstracts at national meetings and have published 13 articles in peer reviewed journals. Plus, we not only have REI fellows, but also Ob/Gyn residents and medical students training here as well.



Now you can get your fertility care started from home with a Virtual Fertility Visit. All of our physicians are maintaining full schedules and can meet with clients "virtually" either by phone or video conferencing, eliminating any social distancing concerns. We've found many patients more comfortable starting off in this manner. It even allows for partners to dial in from different locations if necessary and offers more flexibility when scheduling the initial appointment. Get more information on our website under "Make an Appointment." We look forward to "meeting you!"