

eLearning Series: Reclaiming Your Fertility

Part 2



For **Part 2** of our eLearning series, I will cover one of the most essential aspects of natural fertility enhancement: **diet**. Over the next few weeks, we'll also cover other ways you can enhance your fertility including lifestyle changes, supplements, inner balance, and self-care practices. While I can help you by performing acupuncture and administering Chinese Herbs, the most important work I can do for you is empowering you to take your health into your own hands.

The self-care tools we share with our patients in our comprehensive treatment plans at [Acupuncture Denver](#) are crucial since they are always available (and free!) and can lead to a lifetime of wellness and freedom from disease. While acupuncture, herbs, supplements and other interventions are important, receiving "treatment" without finding balance in your own life (through diet, lifestyle choices, exercise, sleep, healthy emotional expression) is not integrating the full measure of what Traditional Chinese medicine has to offer.

According to Chinese Medicine lore, we know that back in the day the Chinese doctor was paid to keep patients well and *not paid* when her patients got sick. Also, acupuncture and herbs were considered a last resort after diet, lifestyle and self care had fallen short in keeping a person healthy. We can do the best treatment in the world once weekly on our patients, but if they spend the other 6 days and 23 hours of the week burning the candle at both ends, making poor food choices, not exercising, stuffing emotions, and allowing for no down-time, our treatment will

have very limited effects. Of all the self-care tools we teach, I have seen that diet changes have the most immediately beneficial results for our patients. Changing my own diet (especially in terms of going gluten-free) based on my experience with pregnancy losses was one of the great gifts I got from facing infertility.

[Diet](#) is one of the most important ways we can heal ourselves on both a physical and an emotional level. We all must eat. So creating dietary habits that are therapeutic rather than detrimental to health is essential to living a long, vital, healthy life. In terms of fertility, we recommend the **Spleen Qi Diet** with a Mediterranean twist.

You can consult *The Infertility Cure* or *Cooking for Fertility* for a more in-depth explanation but the basics of the Spleen Qi Diet are:

1. No sugar, wheat/gluten, highly refined foods, simple carbs, dairy, alcohol, coffee, trans-fats, cold, iced drinks and foods.
2. Try to eat warm, cooked meals including plenty of veggies, fruits (organic), healthful fats and whole grains with small amounts of fish/lean animal protein (if you are not a vegetarian). Limit dairy to small amounts of full fat yogurt, kefir, or goat cheese.
3. Take time to chew, digest and appreciate meals. Avoid fast-foods and make mealtimes a ritual of gratitude and a time to slow down.
4. Avoid artificial sweeteners, hormones, and pesticides. So many of today's foods are contaminated by chemicals, pesticide residues, and hormones. Many of these chemicals mimic hormones in our bodies and negatively impact reproductive responses, even if only consumed in very small amounts.

Some recent research on diet and IVF showed that patients who adopted a Mediterranean diet (high in veggies, fruits, good fats, low in dairy, meat, refined carbs) had much more positive outcomes than even the "natural foods" eating cohort in the study. So I often recommend combining the Spleen Qi Diet guidelines with a [Mediterranean diet](#) plan.

Many people I see have difficulty letting go of gluten even though gluten intolerance has been associated with infertility as well as many autoimmune, digestive, and inflammatory conditions. Check out [gluten-free girl](#)'s website which includes some great recipes and links to many other helpful gluten-free resources. I also highly recommend *Cooking for Fertility*, by my friend and colleague, [Kathryn Flynn](#), who does nutritional consults at Acupuncture Denver. We sell her wonderful cookbook at the clinic and get rave reviews of it all the time. I also love Paul Pitchford's classic dietary therapy book *Healing With Whole Foods*.

Finally, diet is a highly emotionally-charged issue in our culture. With the population of every state in the US (besides Colorado!) having 20% or higher rates of obesity, food has become almost toxic to many of us. I have no doubt that emotions like shame, fear, and disconnection are underlying our need to self-medicate and numb ourselves with food. As one of my favorite teachers, [Brene Brown](#) points out, we all know "how to" when it comes to food. However, if we

don't have the courage to sit with feelings like vulnerability, uncertainty, and fear but instead numb ourselves with food, we won't get anywhere in terms of adhering to a diet that is mindful, healthful and feeds our soul. I encourage you to take steps to lean into emotional discomfort as you free yourself from eating habits that do not serve you. Pick up the phone and call a trusted friend who can listen, or seek therapy, acupuncture or body-mind programs that support you in feeling your feelings and releasing addictive or self-abusive patterns around food. Believe that *you are enough*, just as you are, so that food doesn't become a way filling up the hungry, hurting places in your heart. And remember to breathe!

Please feel free to [email me](#) if you have any questions about our fertility enhancement treatment options or [workshops/classes](#). We offer one-day Fertile Soul Workshops (where we cover the Fertile Soul Method, including the Spleen Qi Diet) and will soon be adding some short classes to cover the basics of Chinese dietary therapy.

Yours in Health & Happiness,

Jane Gregorie

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