

Acupuncture

FROM PAGE 1

"To not get pregnant feels horrible," Mack said. "[Getting acupuncture treatment] was a last result for me. Looking back, it should have been a first call."

Chen treated Mack three or four times, with sessions that included acupuncture and the prescription of Chinese herbs. Mack said Chen inserted thin, solid needles into specific acupuncture points on her body, including areas on her ankles, arms, stomach and head, to open the body's channels and help hormone balance.

After about two months of treatment, Mack discovered the greatest news of her life.

"I took a pregnancy test. I looked at the test, and it was positive," Mack said. "My whole body went numb for a minute."

Mack, who gave birth to her son Logan in April 2008, credits her conception to Chen's treatments.

While she no longer sees Chen for acupuncture treatment, Mack occasionally mails photos of Logan to Chen's office.

And it seems no doctor could be prouder of his patient than Chen, who—in the middle of talking about his practice—jolted up from his doctor's stool and snatched a photo of Logan to boastfully show off.

Chen said he has treated three women including Mack for infertility who have also conceived.

Chen, who has nearly 25 years of experience in the medical field, graduated medical school and became a licensed orthopedic surgeon in China. He opened his first office in Lombard in 2004 and said he combines Eastern and Western medicine in his education, theory and practice of traditional Chinese medicine and orthopedics.

Traditional Chinese medicine includes acupuncture treatment, Chinese herbs and Tuina, which is Asian bodywork therapy that utilizes massage and adjustment techniques.

"When I came here seven years ago, a lot of people didn't know Chinese medicine in Chicago," Chen said. "In China, a lot of people drink herbs, but in the U.S., people use pills."

When treating a patient, Chen checks the individual's recent blood work, CT scans or X-rays—which is more of a Western medical approach. He also uses an Eastern approach by checking a patient's pulse and tongue color.

"In Chinese medicine, the tongue will tell you a lot of information," he said, adding that

Doctor says acupuncture eases pain



Dr. Leon Chen

the tongue can signify if a patient's energy is low or if he or she may have a cold.

Depending on the patient's ailments, Chen may prescribe painkillers, herb medicine or his patented herb paste for swollen and acute injuries.

"I think any kind of medicine cannot treat the whole disease," he said.

Benefits of acupuncture

Chen said acupuncture can relieve pain and inflammation from arthritis and tendonitis. Individuals with a herniated disc and athletes with acute injuries also can benefit from treatment.

Chen recalled a 93-year-old patient who, for about a year, has visited his office every other week for knee pain relief.

"He first came in with a walker," Chen said. "Now he comes in with a cane."

Chen also said acupuncture can help with migraine and headache relief, digestion problems and weight loss. Patients also have visited Chen to quit smoking.

How acupuncture works

Chen said the body is made up of 14 channels and 361 acupuncture points, and his job is to find out what channels and points may be blocked.

The acupuncture needles release pressure and open each blocked channel—thus, decreasing pain.

Most acupuncture sessions last about 40 minutes, Chen said. Patients lie down on Chen's acupuncture table, close their eyes and listen to relaxing Chinese music as Chen inserts long or short stainless steel needles into the acupuncture gateway points throughout their body.

For those who may be squeamish of needles, Chen said most patients don't feel the needles



Dr. Leon Chen inserts acupuncture needles into different points on patient Ari Mills.

Triblocal.com photo by Mary Rakoczy

BY MARY RAKOCZY

Triblocal.com reporter

Leon Chen inserts needles into specific points on Ari Mills' leg.

Triblocal.com photos by Mary Rakoczy

as they are inserted into the body.

"First, we try one needle," he said of the gradual process he uses for those who are intimidated. "My younger patients use a small needle."

Cooling hot flashes

Lying on the acupuncture table while Chen found her acupuncture points, patient Ari Mills of St. Charles said she first received treatment to help relieve menopausal symptoms. She said within two weeks of treatment, her hot flashes went away.

"In two weeks—it was amazing," Mills said.

Five years later, Mills continues to see Chen for sinus infections as well as low-back and hip pain.

"I've done [acupuncture] for a very serious cold," Mills said. "I can't even explain it. I immediately feel better. I don't have to take any medicine. I used to go to my doctor to get antibiotics—a few weeks later, I'd get [the cold] again."

Mills said her husband visits Chen to treat his high blood pressure, and her mother receives treatment for fibromyalgia, which includes symptoms like pain throughout the body, especially in joints and muscles.

Chen said the average patient will start to

feel improvement in about two treatments, and after about four to six weeks, the patient should feel much better. Many patients continue to see Chen for monthly maintenance visits.

He said an average visit is between \$60 and \$90, depending on the treatment. East West Healing Center offers a package of 10 treatments for \$600, and Chen said patients should contact their insurance provider to see if treatments are covered.

Dr. Michael Toto, a dentist who owns Toto Dental Associates in Palatine, said his low-back problems felt completely better after six weeks of treatment from Chen.

Toto, who began treatment with Chen in 2004, experienced low-back flare-ups for about 35 years.

"Working as a dentist doesn't help," he said. He has seen orthopedic surgeons and received steroid injections, but the injections only temporarily eased his pain.

Along with monthly acupuncture visits, Toto receives massage treatments from Chen.

"I could tell the first day I met [Chen] he knew what he was doing," Toto said. "[My pain] got better and better after each visit."

For more information about East West Healing Center, call 630-290-8031 or go to www.eastwesthealingcenter.net.