

Case Study: Reflexology to Help Sub-Fertility

by *Glenys Underwood*([more info](#))

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It was back in May LAST year that Claire Carrington (27) and her husband Lewis from Lincolnshire first approached me. Their dream to become parents had been halted when Claire discovered she had polycystic ovaries.

After years of irregular periods and trying to conceive, but having no luck, Claire - to her relief - had just been officially diagnosed with the condition associated with the development of cysts on the ovaries that prevent ovulation.



Glenys Underwood

Such sub-fertility can be caused by an imbalance of hormones released by our pituitary glands, and can stop a woman's egg from fully maturing and being released. The day before Claire's first reflexology session with me she had been prescribed Clomid to help with this; the tablets increase hormone levels, stimulating the ovaries and inducing ovulation.

Despite the Clomid, the initial aim of having reflexology was also to normalize Claire's menstrual cycle. Her periods had been dramatically sporadic, averaging 35 days, and regulating them through restoration of the body's natural balance meant her chances of conception could increase.

Identifying the Required Treatment

As with all my clients, I explained to Claire how the ancient healing technique could be used to stimulate the body's reflexes by targeting specific areas on the feet. We also discussed her medical history and lifestyle, eventually identifying stress from her heavy workload as another factor adding to her inability to conceive.

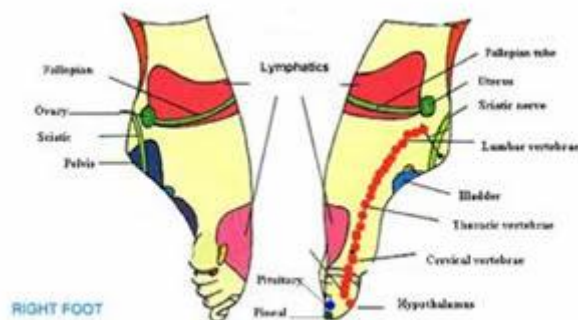
Stress can affect hormones such as progesterone, which is needed to prepare the lining of the uterus ready for successful implantation of the fertilised egg. And, of course, Claire's lack of ovulation meant she was not producing enough progesterone.

Based on what we had discussed, I put together a treatment plan for the stress, and targeted her poorly functioning ovaries and other hormonal imbalances. Alongside progesterone, the follicle stimulating hormone (FSH), luteinising hormone (LH) and oestrogen are also important, as successful conception requires their release at the right times and in the right amounts.

By focusing on the endocrine system reflexes containing the hypothalamus, pituitary, thyroid and adrenal glands, which are a cause of polycystic ovaries, such balances were gradually restored.

I applied gentle pressure to the plantar surface of the big toe and the sole of the foot using an endocrine balance technique I learned during my training as a maternity reflexology specialist. This in itself is a very relaxing routine, and added to the general state of relaxation Claire experienced throughout her treatment, helping to relieve any stress or anxiety.

I then concentrated on massaging the spinal reflex which runs along the medial edge of the foot from the distal phalange of the hallux (tip of the big toe) to the calcaneus (heel bone), in order to stimulate the nerves supplying the endocrine system glands and the relevant organs involved in the reproductive process.



endocrine foot

The reproductive reflexes were obviously very important in Claire's case, and attention was also given to the ovary, fallopian tube and uterus reflexes. The pressure points for these reflexes are found on the heel area of the foot (see chart).

Combined, the continued manipulation of these reflexes slowly began to have an effect on the menstrual cycle, and indeed, after seven weekly treatments Claire experienced her first normal cycle.

Claire explains: "My mum had mentioned reflexology to me as she'd read about it being good for fertility, and after you've been trying for a couple of years and nothing's working you'll give anything a go. I looked up reflexology on the Internet and decided to search for a local fertility and pregnancy specialist. That's when I found Glenys and thought she sounded like the woman for me... and she was!

"At first I went for six weeks on the trot and then every other week. I was optimistic and excited about going, and when I arrived for the first session Glenys asked me questions about my background, medical history and my husband. We talked about reflexology and Glenys explained to me how it actually works.

"During the first few treatments I felt calmer and enjoyed the tingly sensation; the relaxed feeling it gave me lasted for the rest of the day. After a couple of months though, it happened - I had a regular period with 32 days between it and the last one," says Claire.

"Before my cycle was all over the place; 79 days between one, 63 the next and 29 the next before jumping back to 63. I couldn't believe it!"

The Results

By the time of Claire's third cycle, since our first reflexology session and beginning Clomid, her periods had stabilized at 30 days. Just two weeks after her seventh session in July she was delighted to tell me that she was two weeks' pregnant.

"It could have been partly due to the drugs, but I think it was a combination, especially as I know another lady who is on Clomid and still has to take other drugs to get regular periods," says Claire. "We both suffered the same symptoms, except I went for reflexology and now I'm pregnant. We're expecting our baby on 17 April 2009."



Claire Carrington and her husband Lewis

Claire is now a firm believer in the power of reflexology and, having achieved her goal to become pregnant, has chosen to continue with her treatments with me. Now, I gently treat the endocrine reflexes and do a gentle relaxing routine to target these to ensure the correct hormone balance is achieved to maintain the pregnancy.

Three months on, Claire did not have any signs of morning sickness and is now looking forward to a healthy and happy next few months.

It is such a great feeling to have assisted Claire and Lewis, and other couples, on their way to parenthood through reflexology. My aim now is to continue to spread the word about the therapy's healing, pain-relieving and relaxing potential to women who are sub-fertile or wish to experience a calmer pregnancy right through to giving birth.

<http://www.positivehealth.com/article/case-studies/case-study-reflexology-to-help-sub-fertility>