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# Acupuncture: Relief from the ailments of pregnancy

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Drafting a Pregnancy Dream Team: Pregnant woman have options for support — from midwives and doulas to lactation specialists, acupuncturists and more. We take a look at building the perfect team to help during birth. (Video by Carucha L. Meuse/The Journal News)

Written by MARY LYNN MITCHAM STROM

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**What it is:** Never been to an acupuncturist? You're missing out. This integrative medicine has been used for centuries to re-direct the body's energy or *qi* away from pain and disease and back to good health. In a typical session, an acupuncturist will place hair-thin needles in a strategic area of your body, and on a comfy massage table, you'll settle in for one of the most relaxing hours of your life. What pregnant woman couldn't use a little of that? But actually, acupuncture has been known to do more than just help moms-to-be de-stress: Acupuncture is effectively used to treat morning sickness, to bring on labor for overdue babies, to help prevent miscarriages, and of course, aids in all those ailments — like backaches and swelling — that come with carrying a growing human being inside you for nine months.

**Where it's done:** It's done in hospitals like Northern Westchester if necessary during delivery, but most acupuncturists who see pregnant women during their pregnancies do so in their private offices.

**Who should use one:** Anyone. "This treatment is effective and



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'A lot of people who come to us haven't done anything with alternative medicine at all,' says Ron Hershey, an acupuncturist in Croton-on-Hudson who treats pregnant women for nausea, back pain and other ailments. 'M.D.s are a major source of referral. Skeptics often leave thinking, 'who knew?' ' he says. / Carucha L. Meuse/The Journal News

### What acupuncture did for me

For Pleasantville resident Mary Duff, pregnancy meant hypocalcaemia gravidarum, a rare condition that causes

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powerful and has been known to work when many other treatments haven't," says Ron Hershey, an acupuncturist with his own private practice, East Mountain Acupuncture, in Croton-on-Hudson.

**What to ask before you hire one:** Do you have an L.A.c. (a license in acupuncture)?

**Benefits:** Aside from curing pregnancy ailments, acupuncture gives you the most relaxing "me time" you'll ever get.

**Risks:** No physical risks if you're using a licensed acupuncturist, but it can be costly and only a few health insurance plans cover the cost. "More plans will reimburse you for acupuncture than will cover it for a co-pay," says Hershey, who charges \$110 for an initial visit and \$85 for follow-ups.

**How to find one:** Visit [www.nccaom.org](http://www.nccaom.org) to find licensed acupuncturists, like Hershey, in your area. To schedule an appointment with Hershey himself, call East Mountain Acupuncture: 132 Grand St., Croton-on-Hudson; 914-271-3684; [eastmountaincenter.com](http://eastmountaincenter.com)

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