



mind
bodyAlliance

At Connecticut Fertility Associates

4920 Main Street, Suite 306
Bridgeport, CT 06066
(203) 373-1200



fertility & wellness

hand in hand

Mind-Body Alliance at CFA

Connecticut Fertility Associates' Mind-Body Alliance provides holistic and complementary therapies for patients working toward optimizing their fertility. The Alliance is led by an experienced team of specialists in Complementary and Integrative Medicine, who work closely with the CFA fertility specialists to design and implement holistic health care plans to supplement their more traditional fertility treatments. The team's goal is to increase the potential for fertility, to maximize the results of the fertility procedures you may choose, and to improve the chances for a healthy pregnancy by enhancing your overall health and wellness.

What are complementary therapies?

Complementary therapies are diverse medical and healthcare systems, practices, and products that are used in conjunction with more conventional treatments to provide a more comprehensive and holistic treatment plan. They focus on treating both the mind and the body to achieve the best results and improve overall wellness. Some of the treatments offered include acupuncture, massage and reflexology, Chinese and herbal medicine, and nutritional counseling.

The Philosophy of the Mind-Body Holistic Approach

Science has shown that your mind and body are closely interconnected, and that your emotional state can affect your physical health. The Mind-Body Holistic approach is founded on this principle. Our stresses, thoughts, and emotions directly translate into physiologic changes in our body and can impact our health. The Holistic approach treats the whole patient, both the mind and the body, the physical and the emotional. By strengthening and balancing general health, the treatments make medical procedures more effective. Infertility can place incredible stress on a couple and can be detrimental to their quality of life. At CFA we believe the interaction between the mind, body, and spirit is the key to good health. We hope to not only achieve fertility but also to promote a greater sense of well-being.



The Relationship Between Stress and Infertility

Many studies are beginning to show that stress is closely related to infertility. Infertility is an emotionally difficult and challenging time for many women. Those struggling with infertility often have feelings of anxiety, anger, helplessness, frustration, sadness, and guilt. Women often experience an emotional “roller-coaster” and heightened stress when facing infertility.

This stress then perpetuates itself in a vicious cycle: infertility spawns stress which can then actually lead to infertility. Research shows there is a direct link between the brain and the reproductive tract. Stress in women can alter neurochemicals and disrupt hormonal communication between the brain, the pituitary, and the ovary. This can interfere with the maturation of the eggs and the ovulation process. Stress can also cause spasms in the fallopian tubes and the uterus which would impede the movement of the fertilized egg and inhibit conception.

The Mind-Body Alliance seeks to end this vicious cycle by reducing stress, promoting fertility and enhancing one’s sense of well-being. Stress reduction has been shown to be highly beneficial in increasing fertility. It helps to normalize menstrual cycles, improve the health of the egg and sperm, and increase the likelihood of fertilization. A number of studies found that pregnancy rates were greatly increased after infertile participants had practiced relaxation and stress reduction techniques.



What are the different therapies being offered and how do they work?

CFA offers a variety of therapies to reduce stress, increase fertility, and enhance general wellness.

acupuncture / *traditional chinese medicine*

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) combines the use of acupuncture, acupressure, Chinese pharmacology, moxibustion, healing diet, and Qigong exercise. The techniques used in these modalities are all based on TCM theories.

Traditional Chinese medicine works on the principles of qi, balance, and the meridian system. With stimulation of certain meridians, the body’s innate ability to rebalance itself is activated, thereby initiating the steps toward true health. The purpose of acupuncture is to access and stimulate the meridian network through the surface of the body. Acupuncture helps the body reach a balanced, harmonious state.

Herbal diagnosis and treatment, the application of moxa, diet changes and Qigong are all prescribed on an individual basis to treat the patient’s specific disorder and its manifestations. Studies have shown acupuncture to be highly effective in promoting fertility. It can regulate cycles, boost ovulation, and improve hormonal balance. It also helps speed the recovery from the effects of drugs and surgery.



reflexology / *massage*

Reflexology is a complementary therapy based on the principle that there are reflex points on the hands and feet that correspond to all the organs and glands in the body. By pressing with fingers and thumbs on these reflex points, the practitioner will help patients reduce stress, improve blood flow, and bring the body into balance.

The massage room at CFA is a haven of calm and tranquility, and patients can choose from a variety of massage technique. The combined rhythmic strokes, kneading and friction of Swedish

Massage relaxes the nervous system, aids circulation and helps with detoxification. Hot Stone Massage is the ultimate in relaxation while the feather-light strokes of Lymphatic Drainage Massage can help ease common side effects to fertility medications such as headaches and water retention.

exercise / *fitness*

Physical exercise is critical to the body and mind, both before and after conception. However sometimes exercise programs must be designed or modified to optimize reproductive goals. Trainers and fitness experts affiliated with CFA's Mind-Body Alliance are very open to working with you to tailor an exercise regimen that is just right for you, and which you can continue throughout and even after your pregnancy.



nutrition / *metabolic testing*

Nutritional counseling is also offered and emphasized, since proper nutrition is crucial to both healthy living and increasing fertility. A balanced diet is essential for the body to function properly. A lack of protein or calories can cause infertility. Vitamin deficiencies can lead to hormonal imbalances and can even interfere with sperm and egg production. For example, research has shown the body needs enough vitamin E to facilitate conception. The program also offers advice about supplements, diet, and lifestyle, and recommends foods to avoid in excess like caffeine, alcohol, and sugar which in large amounts may impair fertility. Weight loss strategies and guidelines to healthier eating are also taught to enhance fertility and wellness. Some studies have actually shown that losing as little as 5% body mass can greatly increase the chances for conception.

Exact testing of your specific metabolism is also available, to determine the exact amount of calories you burn at rest, and to best design a precise nutritional regimen that is ideal to achieve your goals.





counseling / life coaching *mind/body fertility program*

CFA offers Psychological and Support Services for individuals, couples, and groups, which focus on fertility issues, as well as mind/body practices. In addition, counseling is available for individual couples who are considering egg or sperm donation as well as gestational surrogacy.

The Mind/Body Fertility Program at CFA is a ten week program in which participants learn mind/body practices of deep, alert relaxation, meditation, imagery, mindfulness and cognitive/behavioral strategies. This unique type of behavioral approach significantly reduces the stresses associated with infertility as well as increase one's success with fertility treatments.



fertility / reproductive endocrinology

Reproductive endocrinologists provide treatments for all fertility-related conditions, including hormonal imbalances; anatomical problems such as scar tissue, endometriosis and fibroids; male infertility; and even unexplained infertility. Our treatment options include fertility medications; insemination; laparoscopic, laser, hysteroscopic and microsurgical procedures; and in vitro fertilization (IVF), including donor eggs and surrogacy.

Fertility testing and treatment can sometimes be overwhelming, so we will help you decide which approach is right for you. The Mind-Body Alliance is a unique resource at CFA to help you to reduce stress, and balance your physical and emotional energy.

What are the benefits of using complementary medicine in conjunction with conventional treatments?

The Mind-Body Alliance at Connecticut Fertility Associates marks a revolutionary step toward a more collaborative and comprehensive style of reproductive health care. By removing the boundaries between conventional and complementary care, CFA has created a unique environment that allows you to work with your physician while exploring alternative treatments. Each of the CFA physicians will help you to define and understand your individual goals and concerns, and can explain the benefits and risks of each treatment. Together, you can explore the different treatments and find the combination of complementary and conventional techniques that works the best for you. Each treatment plan is tailored specifically for the individual to ensure the best results.



*Michael Doyle, MD.,
Medical Director,
Connecticut Fertility
Associates.*

From CFA's Medical Director

“We are thrilled to offer these services on-site, without the need for additional referrals, in a uniquely collaborative environment. By working side-by-side with the medical team at CFA, the practitioners in our Mind-Body Alliance integrate their services to complement the therapies which we already offer, rather than compete with them. And by offering these new treatments on-site, you no longer have to worry about finding and learning about alternate treatments on your own. You can now make informed decisions with your CFA physician, and can be assured of the safety and efficacy of the complementary practitioners. The on-site services also allow for healthy communication between your physicians and complementary practitioners, which is vital for the coordination of treatments and schedules. Research suggests that your chances of conceiving may significantly increase when you effectively combine medical treatment with complementary therapies. These services no longer compete with each other but are finally integrated together in a holistic approach that maximizes results.”

The Mind-Body Alliance offers complementary therapies which work with conventional procedures to create a more personal and comprehensive treatment plan. Taking advantage of the close interaction between the mind and the body, complementary therapies mitigate the effects of stress and increase general health. Complementary therapies also allow women to take a more active role in their health care, both in the making of decisions and in the implementation of treatments. The Mind-Body Alliance at CFA strives to encourage a more nurturing, emotionally supportive, and understanding environment that promotes both fertility and overall wellness.





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If you have any questions
about the Mind Body Alliance at
Connecticut Fertility Associates
please call (203) 373-1200
e-mail us at:

askus@CTwellness.com

or visit

www.CTwellness.com