

making **P**are

the Amazon fertility program

BEFORE A COUPLE BEGINS the Amazon fertility program, Ms Dias stresses the couple must understand that, often, infertility is a shared problem. It is often automatically assumed that the problem lies with the woman, when in reality, men have just as many difficulties. Sometimes both need to be treated.

"The Amazon Indians believe if conception isn't occurring, there's a blockage in the lifeline, the area between navel and pubic bone," she says.

"Basically, this program works on the premise that the body, mind and spirit have to be in harmony for conception to take place.

"The couple must be taught how to relax and how to make sex pleasurable, rather than something they do on cue.

"I know when there is a blockage in a woman because it feels cold below her navel, and she experiences tension in that area. She may have irregular periods, painful or heavy periods, or bloating.

"In men, I detect muscular tension or extremes of temperature in the genital area – often it will be too hot or too cold for sperm to survive."

If the problem lies with the woman, as in Jenny's case, Ms Dias encourages her to do the following during her cycle:

before the program

The woman is encouraged to unwind by sitting in a darkened room for two hours, listening to soothing music. She is then given relaxation tapes for use at home. Learning to relax reduces stress, a major factor in infertility.

starting the program

DAY	WHAT TO DO
1-7	Period starts. Take Chinese or Brazilian herbs, and a special herbal tonic as prescribed by Ms Dias. This stimulates the kidney meridians, which are associated with the sex organs, and helps to increase libido. Continue taking herbs every day, at the same time, for the remaining six days.
8	Have a 30-minute session of pressure-point therapy. This increases blood circulation, an important factor in conception.
9-12	Have pleasurable sex as often as possible and continue taking herbs as prescribed.
13	Have another 30-minute session of pressure-point therapy.
14-28	Continue with herbs. If conception doesn't occur, repeat the program or try IVF.

Cost: Initial session, \$90. Each session thereafter, \$45.

For further information on the Amazon fertility program, call Antonia Dias on (03) 9650 6520.

Jenny Dev looks down at little Tara and sighs in disbelief. Sometimes she thinks her gorgeous baby girl is a figment of her imagination. After all, doctors had given Jenny a one in a hundred chance of conceiving.

When Jenny turned 31, her periods reduced to a mere trickle.

"I was told my problem was severe endometriosis," she recalls. "For years, much of my menstrual blood had been flowing back into my cervix, rather than being released during my period."

Jenny's cervix was so blocked up by the resulting endometrial tissue, her gynaecologist said the only way to clear it would be by having monthly hormonal injections. These would bring on a temporary menopause, however.

"It was the worst six months of my life. I had hot flushes, mood swings, fatigue. I put on weight and there were times when I sat down and cried for no reason."

At the end of the treatment Jenny and Gautam spent a tense nine months trying to conceive. Jenny even had laser surgery to clear away more tissue – only to be told her chances of conceiving naturally were just 1 per cent.

Desperate, she started taking fertility drugs in preparation for IVF (in-vitro fertilisation). Then a friend introduced her to Brazilian-born natural fertility therapist, Ms Antonia Dias. Forty Australian couples had already conceived with the help of Ms Dias, who uses techniques used by women living in the Amazon rainforest.

For three months, Jenny was treated by Ms Dias. Consultations included a 30-minute pressure-point massage to her stomach and back. Each visit was timed to take place on days eight and 13 of her menstrual cycle. She was also given herbal preparations to take, and the couple was advised to have sex as often as possible.

Then, two months later, Jenny missed her period. Not daring to believe she was pregnant, she went for a blood test.

"When we got the positive result, it was the happiest moment of our lives," Jenny recalls. "Nothing could compare with it – nothing, that is, apart from the moment we saw Tara for the first time and knew she was really ours."

other alternatives

self-help

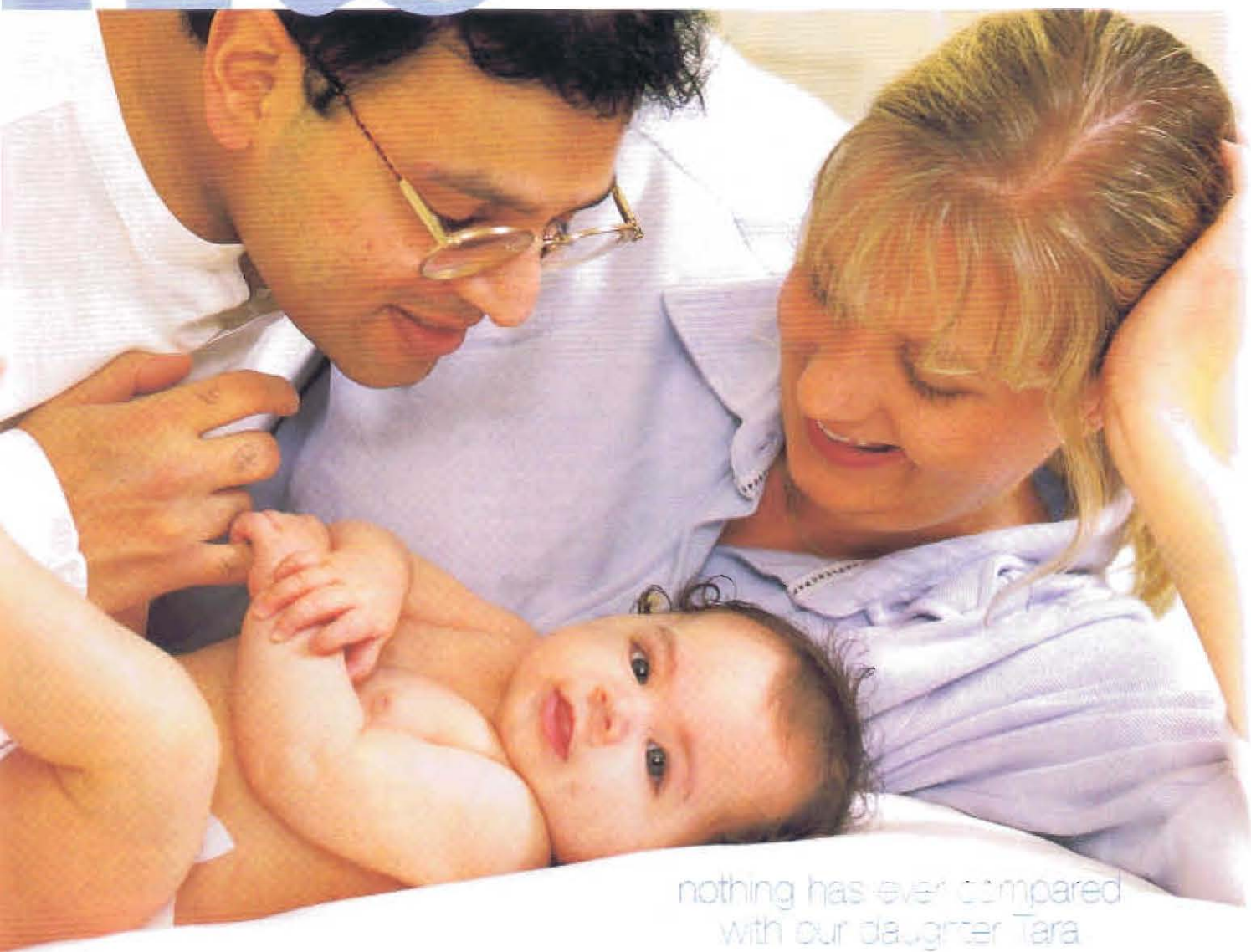
- If your periods are regular, your peak fertility time is mid-cycle – the three days that fall two weeks before your next period starts.
- Sperm production decreases if a man has sex too often, so, apart from during your fertile phase, you shouldn't have sex more than once every 30 – 36 hours.
- The missionary position is best for achieving conception. Remain on your back, with your knees raised, for half an hour after sex.
- Avoid using artificial lubricants as they may inhibit sperm motility – try butter as an alternative.

acupuncture

Many couples trying to conceive through IVF use acupuncture to complement conventional techniques. People think of acupuncture

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INFERTILITY IS A HEARTBREAKING EXPERIENCE FOR ONE IN SIX AUSTRALIAN COUPLES. JENNY AND GAUTAM DEV WERE A STATISTIC – UNTIL THEY DISCOVERED THE ANCIENT REMEDIES OF THE AMAZON WOMEN. SARAH MARINOS REPORTS



nothing has ever compared
with our daughter Tara

as the insertion of needles into specific areas of the body. But today many practitioners also use Chinese herbs and non-invasive lasers. By manipulating pressure points on the body, acupuncture is said to reduce stress, increase blood supply to the uterus and improve the quality of the egg.

Call the Acupuncture Association of Australia on (02) 9633 9187.

chinese herbal tonics

Chinese herbal tonics must be taken in consultation with a natural practitioner. The tonic prescribed will depend on the problem.

There are many possible causes of infertility in women. Oriental medicine regards severe PMS as a precursor to conception difficulties because it may signal a dysfunctional liver system or that blood is not circulating properly.

For men, there are a variety of herbal tonics that can be prescribed to improve sperm motility or low sperm count.

For more information call The Green Medicine Company on (02) 9319 2100.

Healthy sperm

Infertility may result from poor quality sperm or a low sperm count. To help keep your partner's sperm healthy:

- Urge him to wear boxer shorts. Tight underwear heats up the testicles and may inhibit sperm production.
- Encourage him to eat organic fruit and vegetables. Pesticides are thought to contribute to a dramatic decrease in sperm count.
- Ensure that selenium-rich products such as Brazil nuts and fish are part of his diet. Selenium improves sperm quality.

Additional sources: *The Encyclopedia of Complementary Medicine* by Anne Woodham and Dr David Peters (Dorling Kindersley), rrp \$49.95, from good book stores.