

you 40 or over?

Have you had your yearly mammogram?



Are you eligible for a **FREE** yearly mammogram and health screening program.

Every woman is at risk for breast and cervical cancer.

Pap smears and mammograms can save lives because when found early, cervical cancer can be cured.

Are you eligible for this important **FREE** program if:

- You are at least 40 years of age
- You are uninsured or without insurance
- You have never had mammograms and pap smears
- You qualify according to income guidelines (call for the latest guidelines)

people's clinic

33 N. Broadway, Boulder, CO 80304
303-449-6050

Cervical cancer screening is made possible by the Women's Cancer Control Initiative (CWCCI) from the Centers for Disease Control and National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program.

WOMEN'S RX

ACUPUNCTURE ALTERNATIVE TREATMENT FOR A COMMON AILMENT

By ROBIN SCHIESSER

It has been called "honeymoon-itis," a cute euphemism for cystitis, the infection of the lower urinary tract (urethra and bladder) that causes frequent and burning urination. According to the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, more than 11 million women visit doctors annually due to urinary tract infections (UTI).

Periods of frequent sex, such as during a honeymoon, are only one cause of this less-than-joyous condition. For more than 2 million women each year, UTI is a recurring problem that ruins not only post-wedding vacations but also everyday life. Women are simply more susceptible than men, given short urethras, to ever-present bacteria—most commonly *E. coli*, a bacterium normally found in the digestive tract and present on the skin around the rectal area. Once the bacteria make the short trip up into our bladders, they multiply and wreak havoc, causing pain, discomfort, urinary difficulty and fatigue along with cloudy and sometimes bloody urine.

To date, antibiotics have been the first line of treatment for uncomplicated cases of UTI. Antibiotics wipe out not only the bad bacteria, but also the good bacteria that are so important for digestion and the immune system. What's more, it is widely recognized that infection-causing bacteria are becoming increasingly resistant to antibiotics. Successive rounds of more potent antibiotics further weaken the body's innate defenses, sometimes leading to a cycle of re-infection.

When "Kate" first visited my office, she'd had six UTIs in the past year, as well as three bouts of bronchitis, and had been on a merry-go-round of antibiotics. Understandably, she was at the end of her rope.

I treated Kate with acupuncture twice a week for two weeks and then once per week for a month. In acupuncture, slender needles, much thinner than those used to give a shot or take blood, are inserted at specific points on the body that influence the flow of "qi"—pronounced "chee"—or energy, in the body. I also suggested Kate take a dietary supplement called Mannose, which is a simple sugar that binds with bacteria and helps carry them out of the bladder with the urine.

Within the first week Kate noticed an increase in energy. The next week the frequency and urgency of her urination was markedly reduced. She felt calmer and was sleeping more soundly. Her symptoms completely ceased within a month. Six months later she was UTI-free, and she didn't contract bronchitis this winter.

Modern medical research supports evidence that acupuncture is effective in preventing recurrent UTI. A study conducted at the University of Bergen, Norway,



examined women who had experienced at least three UTI in one year. One group was treated with acupuncture twice per week for one month, another group received no treatment. The authors found that 85 percent of the women who received acupuncture remained infection-free during the six months following treatment, relative to 36 percent of those who did not receive acupuncture.

For women who have achieved relief from repeated UTI, the why and how are less imperative. In Kate's words, "It just made a huge difference in my life, not only with the infections, but also my energy level, mood, digestion—everything...It felt like such a miracle."

Robin Schiesser, L.Ac., is a licensed acupuncturist and herbalist practicing in Boulder. She treats a variety of internal and orthopedic conditions, and has an affinity for women's health and fertility. 303-541-9600, www.acupunctureboulder.com.

TIPS ON AVOIDING UTI

- Drink plenty of water and caffeine-free herbal teas. Avoid sweetened drinks. (Caffeine dehydrates the body and sugar inhibits the immune system.)
- Urinate when you feel the need; don't resist the urge.
- Wipe from front to back.
- Cleanse the genital area before sex.
- Use a pH-balanced, non-soap skin cleanser such as NutriBiotic.
- Take 1000 mg of Vitamin C twice a day. It acidifies urine and boosts immunity.
- Probiotics such as *Acidophilus* should be taken to replenish intestinal flora if you have been on antibiotics.