

Book Review



The Baby-Making Bible

by Emma Cannon

Emma Cannon writes that her approach is 'underpinned by the spirit and principles of Chinese medicine, a great and mighty system of diagnosis and treatment that has been in use for over 2,000 years. Now you are going to use Chinese medicine to improve your over-all health, your fertility and your chances of conceiving and carrying a baby full-term'. Or not. Having a needle phobia, I admit that I'm not going to be the first in a queue to see an acupuncturist, but I had an open mind as I started off reading this book (and my husband too – we're in this together, so we might as well both read the books!).

Emma Cannon's background is in acupuncture and treating infertility and gynaecological conditions in particular. As with other writers on the subject of infertility, Cannon's view is that sometimes people can be too quick to jump to the IVF route and forget about the fact that it is essential to get as healthy as possible in both body and mind, prior to embarking on any route to pregnancy. Her approach in the book is the same as that which she uses with her patients – she gets her patients to slow down, to take time to answer questions, apply a 360 degree approach to their life and health, examine the issues that come from the answers to the questions to ensure that the 'engine' is working and that the 'fuel' is good. A diagnostic self-assessment is used to help the reader identify their symptoms against a 'fertility type'. These fertility types are Cold, Damp, Blood Deficient, Heat and Stagnant and are simplified versions of those used in Chinese medicine. Cannon believes in a four month pre-conception baby-making plan.

It was not long into this book that I felt I was asking more questions of the book, than it was telling me answers to. On page 42, the section entitled, 'Good Exercise for Fertility' starts

the list with the sport of 'Qigong'. I expect I wouldn't be the only reader thinking 'What????!'. The description that follows does little to help – 'This is particularly good for those who need to build or move Qi. See page p192 for more on qigong. Do you need a teacher? It has an effect on the mind and the body and can be practised by anybody, of any age or body type'. Belly dancing also appears on the list with the description, 'Something a little different, and particularly good if you are Damp, Blood or Qi Stagnant'. At this stage of the book, we haven't even learnt what the fertility types mean.

Included in the book is a questionnaire for men to use to work out what type they are – Hot man (yin deficient), Stagnant man, Cold man or Damp man. Unfortunately my man didn't want to be described as stagnant man, cold man or indeed damp man, so no matter how much persuasion I tried, he definitely wasn't doing the questionnaire! The book also includes recipes to help ensure the body is as healthy as it can be – there can't be many books that have a title on a page stating 'Recipes to increase Secretions'. Well all I can say is that the recipes for raspberry jelly and egg white omelette are there to try!

For those who work out their 'type' there is much advice given by Cannon and this includes diet, exercise and steps to take concerning treatment such as IVF. For me personally, I tried several times to get into this book but failed, at which point I passed the book to my husband for his bed time reading – he also failed. One can certainly feel Cannon's passion for the subject of Chinese medicine throughout the book and her belief that it works, however it didn't do anything to persuade me that this was a route that I should be persuaded to take.

Emma Palmer
Former I N UK member