

Massage to Support Fertility & Conception

Arvigo Techniques Bridge Traditional Healing & Modern Medicine

by Diane MacDonald, R.N., with Rosita Arvigo, D.N.



The Kek'chi woman from southern Belize had traveled for three days to see the old Maya shaman, Don Elijio Panti. She complained of severe menstrual pain. She said she longed to have another baby and that the youngest of her three children was already 6 years old. Standing next to her [teacher], Rosita Arvigo watched his machete-scarred hands dig deeply into the flesh above the woman's pubic bone. [The woman] frowned and turned her face to the wall. "There," said Don Elijio. "There is her uterus way over to the side. But I know what to do. The uterus is the woman's center; if it is out of balance, everything in her life, physically, emotionally and spiritually, will be out of balance."

—Excerpted from *Sastun: My Apprenticeship with a Maya Healer*, by Rosita Arvigo, D.N., with Nadine Epstein. (Harper Collins, 1994.)

The Arvigo Techniques of Maya Abdominal Therapy® are based on Rosita Arvigo's 13-year apprenticeship with Don Eljio Panti (1893-1996) and her 40 years in the field of natural healing as a naprapath and herbalist. Since 1992, practitioners trained by The Arvigo Institute LLC have worked with couples to enhance fertility. The Arvigo Techniques of Maya Abdominal Therapy restore and balance *chu'lel*, the Mayan word for *qi*, or vital life-force energy. The abdominal massage applications move congested lymph fluid, oxygenate blood, increase immune function and maintain proper nerve flow in pelvic organs.

No matter what fertility-related complaints or ailments a client or couple presents to their Arvigo practitioner, the practitioner addresses the five systems of flow: arterial, venous, nerve, lymphatic and energetic, in abdominal organs, to normalize functions according to nature's original plan. Like other normal bodily functions, conception and pregnancy can be restored to the functions nature intended. Our noninvasive, external massage techniques restore homeostasis, or balance within, as well as hemodynamics, or unimpeded flow of blood and body fluids. Homeostasis and hemodynamics are the two rudders of our physical ship.

"Give nature half a chance, and there is a miracle in store for everyone," says Rosita Arvigo. By combining her extensive knowledge of anatomy, physiology, herbalism and naprapathy, she has established a credible Western explanation of causes, signs and successful treatment of digestive and reproductive ailments for both men and women.

Arvigo in action

Practitioners of The Arvigo Techniques of Maya Abdominal Therapy have two protocols to offer couples seeking fertility enhancement.

One protocol is a one-month protocol that is streamlined for couples who want to conceive immediately, and includes professional sessions until ovulation; herbal, lifestyle and nutritional support; and home-based, self-care massage.

For the client who opts for a three-month protocol, professional sessions are scheduled twice monthly, usually prior to ovulation and menses; herbal, lifestyle and nutritional support are included as well. (Because

providing nutritional information is not in the scope of massage therapy, unless a massage therapist holds dual licensure, she must refer the client to a dietitian or nutritionist for that component of the Arvigo protocol.)

Arvigo practitioners tend to prefer the three-month program, as it provides ample time to assist the client's body into a state of balance; however, sometimes there is urgency for clients to conceive sooner rather than later. In some cases, conception occurs in the first cycle. It is essential to know if ovulation occurs; therefore, menstrual charting is taught to clients and reviewed at each visit.

The Arvigo practitioner's goal for all clients, without regard to the one- or three-month protocol, is twofold: uterine lavage to cleanse a congested uterine membrane, presentation of which includes painful periods and dark blood at the start and end of cycles; and realignment of reproductive organs to their optimal position. Organs may have shifted due to falls that impacted the sacrum, misalignment of the sacroiliac joint, surgeries and adhesions to the 14 ligaments that hold the uterus in its proper pelvic position.

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Katinka Locasio, L.M.T., is a certified practitioner of The Arvigo Techniques of Maya Abdominal Therapy, with a practice based in New York, New York, who supports clients on their path to fertility. She began working with 30-year-old client, "Vivian," in February 2012. Vivian had been trying to conceive for a year without success, utilizing ovulation predictor kits and charting her cycles, but to no avail.

After reviewing her initial intake form, Locasio saw Vivian's main complaints were stagnation related to her menstrual cycle, along with heavy bleeding, painful periods and low-back pain. Initially, Vivian's lower pelvic bowl was quite congested. She received three monthly sessions along with home instruction in self-care massage. Vaginal steam baths as well as nutritional and lifestyle support were included in her plan.

After seeing Locasio for Arvigo sessions and following the home-care plan, she canceled her appointment with a fertility specialist in July 2013, as she was already pregnant the natural way.

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"I feel the combination of The Arvigo Techniques of Maya Abdominal Therapy sessions, practicing daily self-care massage and vaginal steams were the key to [me] becoming pregnant," says Vivian.

Care for men

Optimal reproductive organ position is critical for both male and female reproductive health. For women, a misaligned uterus restricts arterial blood flow and outward flow of toxins, allowing buildup of acid and carbon dioxide in muscles, lymph and surrounding tissue. The result of that buildup is pathology and malfunction. For men, a congested prostate decreases function of that organ, which provides nutrition and enzymes for healthy sperm.

To assure greater success, the Arvigo practitioner prefers to treat couples. Once-monthly sessions can prevent and relieve prostatic congestion and improve sexual function in men. Arvigo self-care techniques can be taught to couples in tandem with each other. Depending on the situation of each male client, practitioners may also recommend herbal and nutritional therapies.

Chronic digestive complaints are common in both men and women with pelvic dysfunction and reproductive problems. Upper abdominal massage is included in The Arvigo Techniques of Maya Abdominal Therapy, and relieves chronic tension in the diaphragm that can obstruct blood flow to the digestive tract and reproductive organs. Clients often report great improvement in digestive function within a few treatments—even more quickly if they are faithful to self-care massage.

Self-care massage

Teaching clients self-care massage techniques is integral to the success of both the one- and three-month

protocols, as self-care massage helps maintain proper position and function of pelvic organs without depending exclusively on practitioners. Using techniques unique to The Arvigo Techniques of Maya Abdominal Therapy, self-care massage is intended to support relief of complaints between sessions with the practitioner. It educates and empowers clients to effect change themselves, allowing for steady, ongoing improvement.

Our approach is holistic; thus, to address emotional and spiritual issues of the couple, practitioners can also offer Maya spiritual healing, as taught by Don Elijo Panti to Rosita Arvigo, which includes spiritual baths, prayers and use of *copal*, or incense, in a healing session. Arvigo also developed a guided-imagery uterine meditation to help clients access deeply rooted, hidden emotional traumas.

Bridging ancient and modern

Many clients seek assisted reproductive technology (ART) treatments alongside Arvigo techniques, as the Arvigo process is a supportive treatment approach that provides nurturing to physical, emotional and spiritual components of the person.

Beth Townsend is a certified practitioner of The Arvigo Techniques of Maya Abdominal Therapy in Grand Rapids, Michigan, who works with a variety of clients, many of whom receive ART fertility treatments as well. "One client, 'Sharon,' came to see me as she was preparing for her fourth round of in vitro fertilization (IVF)," Townsend recalls. "She had been unable to hold the previous transfers, as her uterine lining never increased beyond 8 millimeters of thickness with conventional medicine. This was going to be her final attempt at conception after several years of assisted reproductive technology, including intrauterine insemination and IVF cycles."

"After four professional [Arvigo] sessions, self-care massage at home and other supportive therapies, Sharon conceived via IVF after her uterine lining had increased to 11 millimeters," Townsend continues. "She eventually gave birth to twins, a boy and a girl."

Sharon says after receiving The Arvigo Techniques of Maya Abdominal Therapy, she "would leave feeling lighter and more balanced. Doing the self-care massage at home gave me something to do that was relaxing and nurturing, as I imagined my uterine lining becoming thick and ready for our baby."

"It was amazing to see my uterine lining at 11 millimeters as we prepared for the transfer," she adds. "This had never happened before."

Train in the technique

The Arvigo Institute LLC's training program provides practitioners with a foundation of theory and hands-on training to offer this work to clients who seek to enhance fertility. Since the early 1990s, there has been a steady growth of Arvigo practitioners in 42 U.S. states, as well as in 19 countries around the world. Our practitioners are primarily massage therapists, but include naturopathic and medical doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, acupuncturists, physical and occupational therapists, and chiropractors.

In 2014, Oxford University Press will publish a book of case studies that highlight the most common conditions The Arvigo Techniques of Maya Abdominal Therapy address, titled *Message from the Gods: Ethnobotany of Belize*, by Michael Ablik and Rosita Arvigo.

A healing gift

The Arvigo techniques are a healing gift for clients and practitioners. Rosita Arvigo's commitment to preserve and bridge ancient Mayan medicine into our modern world is valuable to today's couples striving to become pregnant.

Simple and elegant, these ancient techniques combined with modern knowledge bring us back into alignment with our natural selves.

Diane MacDonald, R.N., is the program administrator and certified instructor for The Arvigo Institute LLC (<https://arvigotherapy.com>). She has worked in nursing since 1982, and maintains a private Arvigo Therapy practice in Antrim, New Hampshire. In addition, she has helped develop The Arvigo Institute LLC and its core content since 2001.

Rosita Arvigo, D.N., is a naprapathic physician, herbalist, international lecturer and author. She directs the Ix Chel Tropical Research Foundation in Belize, is a founding member of The Traditional Healers Foundation, and operates the Ix Chel Wellness Center in Santa Elena, Belize.