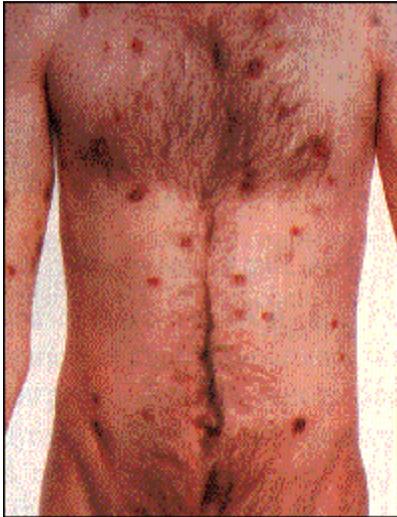


CERTIFIED CHINESE HERBOLOGY ONLINE COURSE - SESSION 5

- Chinese Herbs for Various Ailments by a Traditional Chinese Medicine Doctor

CHINESE MEDICINE FOR AIDS

Every year, sexually transmitted diseases, including AIDS, affect 250 million people worldwide, including 12 million Americans. Because it is easier for a sexually transmitted disease to be



transferred from a man to a woman, women suffer more adverse consequences from sexually transmitted diseases than do men. A woman's reproductive system can be severely and permanently damaged by sexually transmitted diseases, so it is important for everyone to know something about them. Sexually transmitted diseases are caused by three types of pathogens: bacteria, virus, and parasitic insects (scabies, body lice, etc.).

AIDS (acquired immune deficiency) is a generally fatal disease caused by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). AIDS patients suffer from flu-like illness characterized by fever, tiredness, swollen lymph nodes and muscle aches. Symptoms of AIDS might be experienced only after many years infection. Both clearing toxins and enhancing immunity are incorporated in the traditional Chinese medicine treatment.

Conventional medicine treats sexually transmitted diseases by identifying the pathogens of the disease and attacking them with antibiotics and other drugs. Traditional Chinese medicine treats sexually transmitted diseases (and all disease) by differentiating patterns of disease and then treating the specific pattern. Symptoms presented by the patient are analyzed and then classified into an overall pattern of disease or imbalance. Acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine are then used to treat the problem. Chinese medicine therapies were well-established before microscopes permitted researchers to "see" bacteria and virus, but many of the traditional herbal formulas have anti-bacterial or anti-viral properties, and are highly effective against what modern science calls infection, and what classical Chinese texts call "heat toxins." Other traditional herbal formulas "tonify" various Fundamental Substances of the body (such as Qi, Blood, Yin and Yang), and seem to have a positive effect on what modern science identifies as the immune system.

The following sections contain some historical background on sexually transmitted diseases in Chinese medicine, descriptions of the two most common patterns of sexually transmitted diseases, Chinese herbs used in the treatment of sexually transmitted disease patterns, and brief descriptions of common sexually transmitted diseases.

In Chinese medicine, the term "chancre" (Xia Gan) includes all diseases of the reproductive system which are sexually transmitted. This long legacy of Chinese medicine □ the painstaking observation and analysis that differentiates patterns is still valuable today in dealing with the increasing number of modern diseases.

Common Patterns of AIDS

Most expressions of AIDS fall into one of the two patterns discussed below. Generally, acute, infectious-type eruptions of disease fall into the "Toxic Heat" pattern, whereas chronic, debilitating expressions of disease fall into the "Chronic Deficiency" pattern. Symptoms of each pattern are detailed, as well as the Chinese herbal formulas commonly used in treatment.

Toxic Heat Pattern

Symptoms include: ruptured abscesses; itching and burning sensation in the genital area; fever; headache; nausea; vomiting; increased vaginal discharge; turbid/cloudy urine; a burning sensation during urination; painful urination; frequent urination; urgent urination; a red tongue body with a yellow tongue coating; and a rapid pulse. *UT Clearing* (Ba Zhen San), *Damp Heat Clearing* (Long Dan Xie Gan Tang), *Toxin Cleansing* (Wu Wei Xiao Du Yin), and *Honeysuckle & Forsthia Decoction* (Yin Chao Hong Jiang Jie Du Tang) are some widely used formulas for clearing Heat toxins.

Chronic Deficiency Pattern

Symptoms include: ruptured abscesses; low-grade fever; cough without sputum; dry throat; dizziness; back soreness; chest congestion; heart palpitations; insomnia; lassitude; irregular periods; dry bowel movements; weak pulse; and a red tongue body with a thin tongue coating. For this pattern, toxin-cleansing herbal formulas should be combined with tonic herbal formulas. *Chi Yin Tonic* (Sheng Mai Yin), *Water Fire Balance* (Zhi Bai Di Huang Tang), *Chi Blood Tonic* (Ba Zhen Tang), *Chi Spleen Tonic* (Bu Zhong Yi Qi Tang), *GI Strength* (Xiang Sha Liu Jun Zi Wan), and *Kidney Yang Tonic* (Jin Gui Shen Qi Wan) are some time-tested formulas for tonifying the Qi and Blood, and nourishing and strengthening the Lung, Spleen and Kidneys.

Top Chinese Herbs for AIDS

From age-old sexually transmitted diseases such as syphilis to modern sexually transmitted diseases such as AIDS, enhancing immunity is fundamental to the sufferers. People with a lowered immune-system response are more vulnerable to infections, and to the abnormal cell changes that can lead to cancer and tumors. The leading Chinese herbs for enhancing immunity and combating infections and tumor formation are as follows

1. Herbs for Enhancing Immunity

The leading Chinese herbs which boost the immune system include: ginseng (Ren Shen), astragalus (Huang Qi), atractylodis (Bai Zhu), licorice (Gan Cao), rehmannia (Shu Di Huang), angelica (Dan Gui), white peony root (Bai Shao), and bupleurum (Chai Hu). These herbs are traditionally used for tonifying Qi and Blood and nourishing the Kidneys and Spleen. Modern research indicates they are natural immune system enhancers.

2. Herbs that are Anti-infection Agents

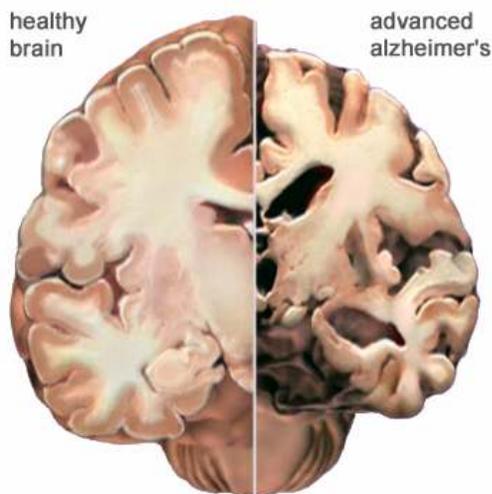
Leading anti-infectious herbs in Chinese medicine include: honeysuckle (Jin Yin Hua), dandelion (Pu Gong Ying), wood leaf (Da Qing Ye), yedeons violet (Di Ding Cao), scabiosaefolia (Bai Jiang Cao), houttuynia (Yu Xing Cao), wood root (Ban Lan Gen), phellodendron (Huang Bai), and sophora (Ku Shen). Most of these herbs are traditionally used for clearing Heat and toxins. Modern pharmacological and clinical research focuses on their anti-microbial, anti-viral and anti-fungal effects.

3. Herbs that Counteract Tumors

Leading anti-tumor herbs in Chinese medicine include: bur-reed rhizome (San Ling), zedoary rhizome (E Zhu), edulis (Shan Ci Gu), nux-vomica (Ma Qian Cao), lobelia (Ban Zhi Lian), and odlenlandia (Bai Hua She She Cao). In traditional Chinese medicine, masses and tumors are diagnosed as Blood Stasis. The function of these herbs is to move and resolve Blood Stasis.

REDUCE THE RISK OF ALZHEIMERS NATURALLY

Progressive mental deterioration with loss of memory and cognitive functions is a common health concern for the elderly. Loss of mental function is not only a frightening prospect for older people, but also for their concerned family members, who often feel completely helpless as they witness gradual personality changes and a decline in quality of life. In this section, I want to talk about the positive steps and changes we can make in our lives to promote good health and good brain function, focusing especially on diet and nutrition. Family members can also encourage and support older people in the challenging task of changing the way they eat.



Some brain deterioration is due to tumors and other organic brain changes, but the majority of progressive mental deterioration, including Alzheimer's disease, is categorized as dementia. In the 1980s, it was estimated that approximately 2.8 million Americans had mild to moderate dementia, and 1.3 million had severe dementia. In the population over 65, the incidence of severe dementia is estimated to be 5% and that of mild to moderate dementia about 10%. Studies show that 50-60% of all cases of dementia are the result of Alzheimer's disease, which means that about one in twelve people over age 65 have Alzheimer's. The incidence of Alzheimer's disease has increased so much that it is being referred to as a "20th Century disease."

What causes the brain to degenerate as we age? Scientists cite three primary factors: genetic inheritance; nutrition; environmental toxins such as aluminum, lead, and pesticides that target the nervous system. These factors manifest themselves in the digestive system as well as the brain. Increased susceptibility to genetic factors and decreased ability to properly absorb nutrients tend to be part of the aging process. If a person shows early signs of Alzheimer's at a relatively young age, it would be a good idea to do a hair analysis to see if there are high levels of toxins in the body tissues.

Diet and Nutrition

The reason I want to focus on diet and nutrition in this article is because we can all do something about what we eat, even if we can't change our genetic inheritance. There are nutritional elements and foods that are vital to good health, and foods that should be avoided. It seems unfair, but the older we get the more we have to watch what we eat because of insulin resistance, increased sensitivities to certain foods, and the diminished ability of the intestinal lining to absorb nutrients and process food through the alimentary canal.

Diet and Nutrition

More and more, nutritionists are sounding the alarm about the changes in the average American diet over the last 50 or 60 years, and the effect this has had on national disease statistics. The modern diet of highly processed and refined foods is low in fiber, and high in calories, carbohydrates, and fat. It is called "junk" food because it fills you up, but doesn't nourish you. Many of the dietary essentials that help control mental degeneration are lost in food processing, and many potentially harmful substances like pesticides, antibiotics, and hormones are added to food. Again, it seems unfair, but we have to make special efforts to find healthful, nutritious foods - shop at co-ops, insist on organically-grown foods, etc.

First, I will give you the bad news - the foods that should be avoided. These include refined sugar, dairy products, wheat, deep fried, and high fat foods. Refined sugar (candy, cookies, desserts) are hardest for many people to give up because of the "sweet tooth" that is little short of an addiction. When I advise someone to cut down on refined sugar, they often say, "I can give up anything but sweets." Many people notice that when they eat sweets, their mental processes start to seem a bit fuzzy or cloudy. I think that sugar can turn off your brain power. I am not saying that sugar causes Alzheimer's, but why put extra demands on your body and brain by eating food that interferes with optimum functioning?

The same holds true for dairy products. I advise people to avoid dairy for six weeks, and see how they feel then. It would be even better to try a three-month break from dairy. Some of my patients notice memory improvement and better concentration just from giving up dairy. Again, it is very difficult to avoid dairy in the typical American diet. A client of mine who is a professional chef said, "It's easy to be a good cook in the U.S. □ you just pile cheese and tomato sauce on top of everything." Fortunately, there are good alternatives available for most dairy products now, even though you may have to go to a co-op or whole foods store to find them. You can get soy or almond cheese, soy yogurt, soy milk, and rice ice cream. You can also substitute soft tofu for cream cheese in many recipes.

What foods should we eat? A lot of foods are great for our memories and reduce the risk of Alzheimer's, such as whole grains, soy products, legumes, fish, brewer's yeast, millet, rice, wheat germ, nuts (especially walnuts), black sesame seeds, pumpkin seeds, and sprouts. These foods are rich in vitamin B, beneficial proteins and many other nutrients. Also, make sure that you eat fruits and lightly-cooked vegetables every day.

Two nutritional building blocks that are key to optimum brain function are amino acids and the B-complex of vitamins, such as choline and B6. Amino acids are essential for building protein. Certain of the B vitamins can increase blood circulation in the brain, improve memory, and lower cholesterol, thus reducing the risk of hardening of the arteries and strokes.

TCM Approach

Next, I will consider Alzheimer's from the perspective of traditional Chinese medicine. While there is no diagnosis in Chinese medicine that specifically corresponds to Alzheimer's disease, the general physical and mental symptoms of Alzheimer's are easily recognized by Chinese medicine practitioners, and there are treatments for many of the symptoms. In Chinese medicine theory, the Kidneys are the internal organ system that is responsible for reproduction, growth, and aging over time. The Kidneys also control the bones, the bone marrow (which includes the brain and spinal cord), the head hair, and the ears. The Western idea of genetic inheritance is very compatible with the Chinese concept of identifying the Kidneys with reproduction and inherited constitution. Furthermore, the traditional kidney-related signs of aging, such as gray hair, loss of memory, and hearing difficulties are also compatible with what Western medicine recognizes as age-related adrenal gland slowdown or dysfunction. Both Eastern and Western medicine recognize that stress can affect the adrenal glands and accelerate the aging process.

Because signs of aging, including symptoms of Alzheimer's, are related to loss of Kidney energy over time, part of the treatment for Alzheimer's is taking Kidney tonics. There are quite a lot of foods and herbs that are valued by the Chinese as Kidney energy tonifiers. Some good Kidney foods are black sesame seeds, kelp, shiitake and black ear mushrooms. In general, black and/or salty-tasting foods act on Kidney energy. Some herbs that benefit the kidneys are He Shou Wu (Fo Ti), rehmannia root, and ginseng.

Over the last twenty to thirty years, Asian scientists have been systematically analyzing the herbs used in traditional Chinese medicine. The traditional uses of herbs are often completely validated by scientific research. Unfortunately, much of this research and information is not available in the U.S. because it is only printed in Chinese or Japanese journals. Western pharmaceutical companies tend to focus on developing synthetic drugs that can be patented, rather than researching existing plant material. Tacrine is a synthetic drug that has been used successfully with Alzheimer's patients. Studies indicate that Alzheimer's patients have a deficiency of the neurotransmitter acetylcholine (ACh) in particular areas of the brain. Tacrine works by blocking the enzyme that breaks down ACh, which means that more ACh is available in the brain.

There are several Chinese herbs which have a positive effect on Alzheimer's symptoms, including the well-known ginseng (*Panax ginseng*) and ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*). Ginsenosides from ginseng can increase production of ACh in the brain. Ginseng has been used for centuries in China as a warming, yang-stimulating herb that improves mental function. Huperzine A, derived from *Hyperzia serrata* root, works in a similar manner to the synthetic drug Tacrine.

Ginkgo extract has an effect of promoting vasodilation and blood flow. It therefore has a therapeutic effect on cognitive disorders and high blood pressure. In Germany, doctors are enthusiastic about the benefits of ginkgo. A combination of ginkgo and ginseng called Gincosan is claimed to produce very good results in elderly patients. Two other herbs, Yi Ye Chau (*Securinega suffruticosa*) and Fan Hong Hua (*Crocus sativa*) have been proven to have positive effects on the central nervous system.

Acupuncture is also considered effective therapy for Alzheimer's disease. There is solid evidence that acupuncture increases certain neurotransmitters in the brain, and can actually stimulate nerve regeneration. Increased serotonin levels probably explain why acupuncture is so effective in controlling pain and managing stress. Acupuncture also promotes blood circulation to the brain and improves memory and concentration. So there is good reason for people who have Alzheimer's, or who are at risk for developing it to try acupuncture.

Another common use for acupuncture is to control various addictions. In the case of people who feel their sugar cravings or other food cravings are out of control, and who want to cut down on these foods, acupuncture can be very useful. Professionals who deal with addictive behavior do not expect will power alone to be effective. The first thing you can try with a sugar craving is to substitute naturally sweet foods for sugar-added foods. Try eating dates, apples, sweet potatoes, squash, or dried fruits when your sweet tooth acts up. If this doesn't work, then consider acupuncture treatments.

A very important factor in the treatment of Alzheimer's is keeping active □ both physically and mentally. Walking, Tai Chi, swimming, reading, playing games, and socializing with others are all excellent ways to keep active. In China, old people who are surrounded by a loving family and have grandchildren around, have better mental function than those live alone. I am not saying that you have to live in a crowded house with an extended family to be healthy, but I do recommend having a hobby and keeping some excitement in your life.

RESTORING THE FLOW -- TCM AND AMENORRHEA

If you have missed three periods in a row and you are not pregnant or menopausal, this is a matter of serious concern. You should be especially concerned if you are dealing with infertility issues, or are at risk for osteoporosis. Under these circumstances, it would be wise to visit a doctor or consult a women's health specialist. The absence of menstruation in pre-menopausal women is called amenorrhea. If menstruation has not begun by the age 16, it is called "primary amenorrhea." If previously normal menstruation stops for more than three months in a woman who is not pregnant or breast feeding and is not nearing menopause, it is called "secondary amenorrhea."



Amenorrhea in Conventional Medicine

From the viewpoint of conventional Western medicine, normal menstrual cycles are based on a complex feedback system between the hypothalamus, the pituitary gland, and the ovaries, as well as the cyclical reaction of the lining of the uterus (the endometrium) to sex hormones. Primary amenorrhea is considered to be caused by one of the following disorders: hypothalamic disorder, such as deficiency of thyrotrophic, adrenocorticotrophic or gonadotropin-releasing hormones; pituitary insufficiency; or an ovarian disorder, such as a sex-chromosome problem. Secondary amenorrhea can be caused by any of the following disorders: pituitary dysfunction; ovarian dysfunction; adrenal gland dysfunction; thyroid dysfunction, etc. Quite a few hormones are involved in the absence of menstruation, including follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH), luteinizing hormone (LH), prolactin, estrogen, progesterone, androgen, and gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH).

Because menstrual irregularities are so strongly linked to hormone imbalances, it is natural for doctors to prescribe hormone therapy to regulate menstrual cycles. Progesterone and estrogen are given to start or restart the periods. Estrogen supplements are frequently prescribed to help prevent osteoporosis in women with no underlying disorder if the amenorrhea has lasted for more than six months. Birth control pills are the most popular form of estrogen replacement therapy. If hormone replacement therapy is recommended to you, it is important for you to know about the functions of these hormones, as well as their side-effects and long-range effects. In this article, we will focus on secondary amenorrhea in the framework of Chinese medicine.

Amenorrhea in Chinese Medicine

In traditional Chinese medicine, the most important organs that regulate Blood and menstruation are the Liver, Spleen, and Kidneys; and the key Fundamental Substances are Chi and Blood. The Liver "stores the Blood," and is responsible for maintaining a smooth and even flow of Blood, Chi, and emotions through the body. Emotions such as anger, irritation, resentment, and anxiety can lead to stagnation of Liver Chi, which in turn can lead to Blood Stasis (especially in the lower body). A main function of the Spleen is to produce Chi and Blood. If the Spleen is weak, there will eventually be a deficiency of Chi and/or Blood, so there will not be enough blood for normal menstruation, or enough Chi to regulate normal cycles. Also, if the Spleen is too weak, it can lead to a condition of Dampness in the body, and Phlegm-Damp can obstruct the uterus. The Kidneys are the organ responsible for conception, reproduction, and aging over time. Kidney-essence is the ultimate origin of menstrual blood.

Amenorrhea can be differentiated into Deficiency patterns or Excess patterns. With Deficiency patterns, the Blood is exhausted or deficient. With Excess patterns, Chi or Blood may be stagnant, retention of Phlegm-Dampness can lead to obstruction of menses, or there is Blood Stasis.

Besides the mechanisms discussed above, some lifestyle factors can cause amenorrhea. Long-term use of contraceptive pills can bring about Blood Deficiency or Kidney Chi Deficiency. Excessive physical exercise or participation in sports, with over-use of the muscles and sinews, can lead to a deficiency condition of the Spleen and Liver. The Spleen fails to produce adequate amounts of Blood, and the Liver fails to store Blood properly, which leads to amenorrhea.

Patterns and Herbal Treatment of Amenorrhea in Chinese Medicine

The following four patterns are very common in cases of secondary amenorrhea. The first two patterns, Kidney Liver Deficiency and Chi Blood Deficiency are Deficiency patterns. To treat these two patterns, the Deficiency must be tonified. The other two patterns, Chi Stagnation with Blood Stasis, and Phlegm Dampness Retention, are Excess patterns. For these two patterns, the Excess should be eliminated through the use of Chinese herbal medicines.

Kidney Liver Deficiency

General weakness, malnourishment of the Kidneys and Liver, or an irregular sex life are the origins of this pattern. Symptoms include: absence of menstruation for a significant period of time; a thin body; dizziness; palpitations; back and knee soreness; insomnia; dream-disturbed sleep; chest congestion; anxiety; hot flashes; excessive perspiration; a red tongue body, absence of tongue coating, or cracks on the tongue; and a wiry-rapid-thin pulse. Rehmannia (Shu Di Huang), dioscorea root (Shan Yao), and angelica (Dang Gui) are the leading herbs that tonify Kidney-essence and Liver Blood. *Restoring Kidney Formula (Gui Shen Wan)*, which includes these herbs, is a wonderful formula for this pattern of amenorrhea.

Chi Blood Deficiency

Chronic illness; excessive bleeding from childbirth, miscarriage, or surgery; or prolonged breast feeding are possible origins of this pattern. Typically, periods become scantier and scantier at the end of the cycle, and eventually cease altogether. Other symptoms include: a pale complexion; dizziness; palpitations; weakness of the limbs; lassitude; loose stools; a pale, thin tongue; and a thin-wiry or thin-weak pulse. Ginseng (Dang Shen) is the top Chi tonic herb. Angelica (Dang Gui) is the leading Blood tonic herb. *Chi Blood Tonic (Ba Zhen Tang)* is the most widely-used herbal formula for the Chi Blood Deficiency pattern.

Chi Stagnation and Blood Stasis

Emotional stress or trauma is the most common origin of this pattern. Menstruation ceases after intense or prolonged emotional stress or trauma. Symptoms include: absence of menstruation; depression; anxiety; a sensation of fullness in the chest and under the rib cage; swelling or fullness of the abdomen with an aversion to pressure; lack of appetite; thirst; desire to drink cold water; constipation; sides of the tongue are purple, with a yellow-white-sticky tongue coating; and a thin-wiry or deep-choppy pulse. Bupleurum (Chai Hu), angelica (Dang Gui), and white peony (Bai Shao) are some popular herbs, and *Liver Spleen Harmonizer (Xiao Yao San)* is a well-known herbal formula to address this pattern.

Phlegm Dampness Retention

Chronic overweight or a deficient Spleen are a common background for this pattern, as well as the habitual consumption of cold, raw, or greasy foods (especially dairy products). Overweight and Spleen Deficiency contribute to metabolism problems, and retention of Phlegm Dampness leads to absence of menstruation. Other symptoms include: a feeling of fullness and congestion in the chest and lower rib cage; nausea; vomiting; a feeling of sticky phlegm in the mouth; lassitude; large amounts of sticky, mucoid vaginal discharge; a yellow-white-sticky tongue coating; and a thin-slippery pulse. Single herbs such as atractylodes lancea tuber (Cang Zhu), cyperus tuber (Xiang Fu), and tangerine peel (Chen Pi), and an herbal

formula, *Phlegm Cleansing (Cang Fu Dao Tan Tang)* are widely used to address this pattern of amenorrhea.

Acupuncture vs. Medications for Amenorrhea

Besides herbal medicine, acupuncture and moxibustion are two other widely-used healing tools in traditional Chinese medicine. Although both traditional Chinese medicine and conventional Western medicine aim to achieve the same goal --- restart the periods and restore the normal cycle, a significant difference exists between these two modalities. Traditional Chinese medicine stimulates the body to regulate its naturally-occurring hormones and restore the normal hormone function, while conventional Western medicine restores the function of the thalamus-pituitary-ovary axis through the use of artificial hormones. The following clinical study shows that they have very different long-lasting effects.

A clinical study was conducted at the Thousand Buddha Mountain Hospital in Jinan, China, to determine the efficacy of acupuncture vs. medication for amenorrhea. There were ninety-five subjects in the study. All the patients' amenorrhea has lasted for six months or more, and was attributed to the use of birth control pills. Fifty-seven of the patients were in the Acupuncture Treatment Group, and thirty-eight patients were in the Medication Group. Two patterns of amenorrhea, Spleen Liver deficiency and Liver-Chi stagnation, were differentiated in the Acupuncture Treatment Group. Acupuncture points Ren 3 (Zhong Ji), extra point Zi Gong, Ki 12 (Da He), Sp 6 (San Yin Jiao), and BL 32 (Ci Liao) were used. BL 20 (Pi Shu), BL 23 (Shen Shu), St 36 (Zu San Li), Sp 4 (Gong Sun) and moxibustion on these points were added for the Spleen Liver Deficiency pattern, while BL 18 (Gan Shu), Liv 13 (Qi Men), and Sp 9 (Yin Ling Quan) were added for the Liver Chi Stagnation pattern. A course of treatments consisted of twenty treatments. The whole treatment consisted of six courses, with five-day breaks between the courses. In the Medication Group, patients took Stilbestrol first, then Progesteronum was injected. One month after finishing the treatments, the effective rate (cure, great improvement and improvement) for the Acupuncture Treatment Group was 96.49%, while the effective rate for the Medication Group was 97.36%. Initially, there was no significant difference between these two groups. Six months after finishing the treatments, however, the effective rate was reported at 94.73% for the Acupuncture Treatment Group, while the effective rate dropped to 78.94% for the Medication Group. This is a significant difference between the two groups, suggesting that the long-range effects of acupuncture are very positive.

Many studies in China reveal that acupuncture, moxibustion, and Chinese herbal medicine are superior to conventional medicine in the treatment of menstrual disorders, including amenorrhea.

HEALING ARTHRITIS WITH CHINESE MEDICINE

Each year millions of American workers are sidelined by joint pain. If the pain is mild, many just "tough it out," but find that the problem gets worse year by year. Severe joint pain can incapacitate people, making it impossible for them to exercise or live the life they want to live.



Most people with joint pain are diagnosed with arthritis, which is a general term for a number of different conditions that involve swollen, painful, and/or stiff joints. The two most common forms of arthritis are rheumatoid arthritis, which affects more than 6.5 million people in the United States alone; and osteoarthritis, which is an age-related degeneration of joints. One in seven Americans is afflicted with osteoarthritis, and some are virtually housebound by joint pain.

In the West, anti-inflammatory drugs are commonly prescribed for arthritis. In the East, acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine, with their thousand-year-old history, are the major health care modalities used to fight joint and musculo-skeletal disorders including arthritis. These ancient therapies are still used because they are empirically effective, and have stood the test of time. Now they are standing to meet the tests of Western medicine.

Arthritis in Conventional Medicine

Osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, infectious arthritis, chemically-induced arthritis, temporomandibular joint syndrome (TMJ), juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis and gout are all types of arthritis that are differentiated in conventional Western medicine. The most commonly seen forms of arthritis are osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis.

Osteoarthritis

The joint pain of osteoarthritis is primarily due to the gradual loss of protective cartilage. Physical injury, mechanical stress or metabolic abnormality can break down the cartilage which cushions the ends of the bones from rubbing against each other. As a result, bones begin to grate against each other, producing pain and further degeneration.

Rheumatoid Arthritis

Rheumatoid arthritis is the most severe type of inflammatory joint disease. It is an auto-immune disorder in which the body's immune system attacks its own tissues, damaging joints and the surrounding soft tissue. Painful, stiff and deformed joints of the hands, arms, feet and legs are commonly seen.

Anti-inflammatory drugs are the main weapon that conventional medical doctors prescribe for chronic inflammatory arthritis. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as aspirin, ibuprofen, and gold compounds; and steroid-based drugs such as corticosteroids and immunosuppressive drugs are widely used for arthritis. Long-term use of these medications can produce side effects such as stomach irritation, gastritis and ulcers. An exercise program and physical therapy are helpful for osteoarthritis patients to maintain a satisfactory level of activity. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and corticosteroids are provided for short-term relief.

Arthritis in Chinese Medicine

In traditional Chinese medicine, the condition that is congruent with arthritis is called "Bi syndrome." Bi syndrome manifests as pain, soreness, or numbness of muscles, tendons and joints, and is the result of the body being "invaded" by the external climatological factors of Wind, Cold, Heat, and/or Dampness. The symptoms manifested by the individual depend on which external pathogenic factor is strongest. The four main patterns of Bi syndrome are differentiated below, and the leading herbs that are used to treat each pattern are listed.

Wind Pattern

Exposure to wind, especially when one is unprotected and exposed to the wind for a long time, is an important cause of the Wind pattern of arthritis. Any Wind pattern is characterized by movement of symptoms from place to place. In the case of Wind Bi, there is joint soreness and pain which moves from joint to joint. Movement of joints is limited, and there is often fever, as well as an aversion to wind, or windy weather. A thin white tongue coating and a floating pulse are signs that help Chinese medicine practitioners diagnose Wind Bi. Leading herbs for this pattern include ledebouriella (Fang Feng), and ephedra (Ma Huang).

Cold Pattern

The Cold pattern of arthritis (Cold Bi) is characterized by severe pain in a joint or muscle. This pain has a fixed location, rather than moving about (as in Wind Bi). The pain is relieved by applying warmth to the affected area, but increases with exposure to cold. Movement of joints is limited. A thin white tongue coating, combined with a wiry and tight pulse are signs of Cold Bi. Leading herbs for this pattern include aconite (Wu Tou), and ephedra (Ma Huang).

Damp Pattern

The Damp pattern of arthritis (Damp Bi) is characterized by pain, soreness and swelling in muscles and joints, with a feeling of heaviness and numbness in the limbs. The pain has a fixed location and is aggravated by damp weather. A white, sticky tongue coating and a soggy, slow pulse are signs of Damp Bi. Leading herbs for this pattern include coix (Yi Yi Ren), and lancea atractylodes (Cang Zhu)

Heat Pattern. The Heat pattern of arthritis (Hot Bi) can develop from any of the above three patterns. It is characterized by severe pain and hot-red-swollen joints. The pain is generally relieved by applying cold to the joints. Other symptoms include fever, thirst, anxiety, and an aversion to wind. A yellow, dry tongue coating and slippery, rapid pulse are seen with Hot Bi. Leading herbs for this pattern include anemarrhena (Zhi Mu), gypsum (Shi Gao), and cinnamon (Gui Zhi).

A time-tested herbal formula for joint pain is *Joint Strength* (Du Huo Ji Sheng Wan). This herbal combination was written down about twelve hundred years ago, during the Tang Dynasty. It contains herbs that relieve pain, as well as herbs that nourish and strengthen the joints. It has been used by millions of people over the last millennium. You can take it over a long period of time without worrying about side-effects.

Support for Acupuncture

Joint pain, back pain, and headaches constitute a large percentage of all the visits paid to doctors' offices and acupuncture clinics in any country at all times. In traditional Chinese medical theory, it is believed that the pathogenic factors that cause Bi syndrome (Wind, Cold, Damp, Heat) lodge in the body's meridians (energy pathways) and obstruct the free flow of Chi and Blood in those meridians. When blood and energy are not able to flow naturally, they stagnate, causing pain, heat, and other symptoms of illness. Acupuncture and herbal therapy help to open the blockage, balance the energy, and harmonize Chi and Blood.

Scientifically proving the validity of these ancient concepts is challenging, but promising. More and more scientifically-designed clinical studies support the use of acupuncture for arthritis. One study examined the effects of acupuncture on 32 osteoarthritis patients waiting for knee replacement surgery. After nine weeks, patients receiving acupuncture treatments reported a decrease in pain, while pain increased in untreated patients. The patients with acupuncture treatments were able to walk farther and faster, compared with the untreated group. Another study at the University of Maryland, School of Medicine found that 12 patients with osteoarthritis of the knee improved significantly after acupuncture treatments. These results encouraged the researchers to do a larger study which is currently under way.

Modern scientific research has also revealed the mechanisms which provide relief for arthritis patients. Studies show that acupuncture can stimulate the production of endorphins (natural pain-killing hormones in the brain), and the anti-inflammatory hormone adrenalcorticotropin. Somehow, the acupuncture needles trigger the body to heal itself by producing hormones that reduce pain and inflammation. Acupuncture can then be used on an ongoing basis to prevent re-occurrence of arthritis once it has been successfully cured.

ACUPUNCTURE FOR ASTHMA

Over the last 50-75 years, the incidence of asthma in industrialized countries has steadily increased, especially among children, to alarming proportions. Scientists around the world are studying this "epidemic," as well as researching the long-term effects of taking anti-asthma drugs such as bronchodilators. In China, research on the efficacy of acupuncture and herbal medicine in the treatment of asthma shows that traditional Chinese medicine compares favorably with standard Western treatment, and provides an alternative approach for those who want to strengthen their bodies' natural defenses and avoid the long-term use of drugs.

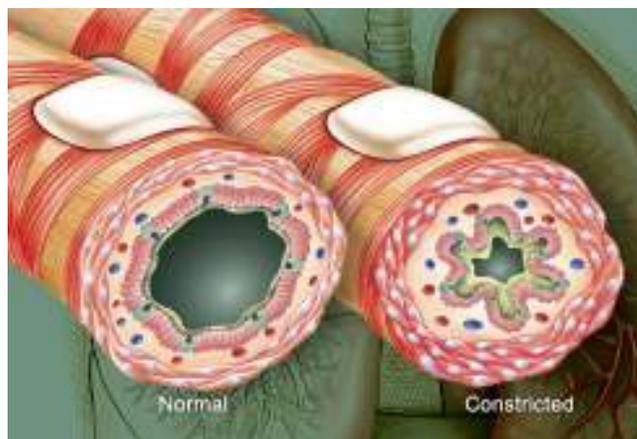


Asthma is an immune-system-related respiratory disorder in which the breathing passages become narrow or blocked, and are typically inflamed. Asthma can be "extrinsic" or "intrinsic." Extrinsic asthma is caused by an allergic reaction to a foreign substance (called an allergen) such as pollen, animal dander, animal fur, dust, mold, food additives, or feather pillows, and it is strongly seasonal. Intrinsic asthma is a non-seasonal, non-allergic type of asthma. Trigger factors for intrinsic asthma attacks include air pollutants, tobacco smoke, strong odors, cold weather, physical exertion, emotional stress, or temperature or humidity changes. Often, an episode of intrinsic asthma will follow a severe respiratory infection.

Asthma in Chinese Medicine

In traditional Chinese medicine theory, asthma is clearly differentiated between the actual attacks and the periods between attacks. When the attacks are happening, this is considered to be an acute, excess condition, and the objective is to disperse the Excess and stop the attack. Wind, a non-substantial pathogenic factor, lodges in the bronchi and combines with Cold or Heat pathogenic factors to cause bronchospasms.

Between attacks, the body is considered to be in a Deficiency condition. The Lungs and Kidneys work together to produce "wei qi," or Defensive Chi. Defensive Chi can be thought of as analogous to the immune system. It is a Yang energy that is manufactured from the food we eat. The Kidneys are the root of our ability to produce Defensive Chi, and the Lungs spread Defensive Chi near the outer surface of our bodies to ward off pathogenic factors like Wind, Cold, and Heat. When the Lungs or Kidneys (or both) are weak, there is often a deficiency of Defensive Chi, making us more vulnerable to colds, infections, asthma attacks, etc. It is thought that a person's Defensive Chi can be weak due to a hereditary constitutional weakness (up to 75% of children with asthma have a family history of the disorder); but mothers who smoke during pregnancy and childhood immunizations are also cited as contributing factors in asthma.



Acupuncture can have a remarkable effect in stopping an acute asthma attack. Many patients experience immediate relief after an acupuncture treatment, feeling that the airway blockage was simply removed. Because bronchospasms result from over-stimulation of the

parasympathetic nervous system, some traditional acupuncture points for "calming the spirit" are widely used for asthma. Stimulation of these points can relieve both physical and emotional stress, possibly because they trigger the release of neurotransmitters in the brain. The patient can therefore experience both a physical release from his bronchial constriction, and also an emotional or psychological release from the fear of constriction and suffocation.

In Chinese philosophy, and in Chinese medicine, man is seen as an integral part of nature. The fact that allergen-induced asthma attacks are strongly seasonal, with the most devastating attacks occurring in winter and spring, leads Chinese medicine practitioners to coordinate their treatment of asthma sufferers with the seasons. In the winter and spring, during attacks, the emphasis is on dispersing the pathogenic factors of Wind, Cold, and Heat. In the summer, attention is turned to tonifying the Deficiency condition of the Lungs and Kidneys, and stimulating the body to increase its reserves of Defensive Chi. Because summer is the most Yang time of the year, the energy of the season is used to build up the body's supply of Yang energy.

Science Says

Scientific studies in China and elsewhere show that the ancient Chinese medicine theories have a basis in scientific fact. The whole scope of traditional Chinese medicine is an elaborate and elegant construct which can't be scientifically proven in its entirety, but modern research reveals a number of mechanisms that support the ancient healing arts:

Neuro-regulation of Air Passages

Researchers at Nanjing University of Traditional Chinese Medicine found that relieving asthma attacks by acupuncture is closely related to neuro-regulation of air passages. They further found that sympathetic nerve excitement and diastolization of the smooth muscle of the bronchial tubes can be achieved by stimulating acupuncture points on the back. The systaltic function of the smooth muscles of the airways is regulated through the neuroendocrine center of the hypothalamus, and this function can be measurably affected by needling certain back shu points.

Serum cAMP and cAMP/cGMP

Levels of certain substances in the blood called cyclic adenosine monophosphate (cAMP) and cyclic guanosine monophosphate (cGMP) seem to have a bearing on asthma patients. Asthma patients experiencing wheezing and breathlessness have lower serum levels of cAMP and cAMP/cGMP. Many clinical studies conducted in China found that acupuncture can increase the levels of serum cAMP and cAMP/cGMP.

RBC-CR1R

Red blood cells have the function of transporting oxygen to body tissues, and also aid in immunoabsorption. In traditional Chinese medicine, the Kidneys have the function of generating and controlling bone growth, storing our genetic essence, generating bone marrow, and aiding in the production of blood. Kidney Deficiency in traditional Chinese medicine and low red blood cell counts in conventional medicine are related. Research in Hangzhou Red Cross Hospital shows that the immunological index of red blood cells (RBC-CR1R) was markedly increased after optimum-timing acupuncture treatment for Kidney Deficiency, compared with the control group.

Acidocyte Regulation

An acidocyte is a type of white blood cell. An increase in acidocyte levels indicates allergic reaction in an organism. A clinical study at the Affiliated Yueyang Hospital of Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine shows that acupuncture at UB13 (Fei Shu), LU5 (Chi Ze), LU7 (Lie Que), ST40 (Feng Long), Ren 22 (Tian Tu), and extra point Ding Chuan can decrease acidocyte levels.

17-Hydroxy Corticosteroid in Urine

Traditional Chinese medicine believes that there exists a correlation between asthma and the pattern of Kidney Deficiency. Clinical observations reveal that asthma patients tend to have lower levels of the hormone 17-hydroxy corticosteroid in their urine, which is closely related to Kidney Deficiency in Chinese medicine. Many clinical studies show that acupuncture can increase the level of 17-hydroxy corticosteroid in urine.

Regulate Hypophthalmus-pituitary-adrenocortical function

It is believed that asthma attacks are correlated with a lower hypophthalmus-pituitary-adrenocortical function. Clinical research found that tonifying the Kidneys with acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine can improve that function and relieve asthma attacks.

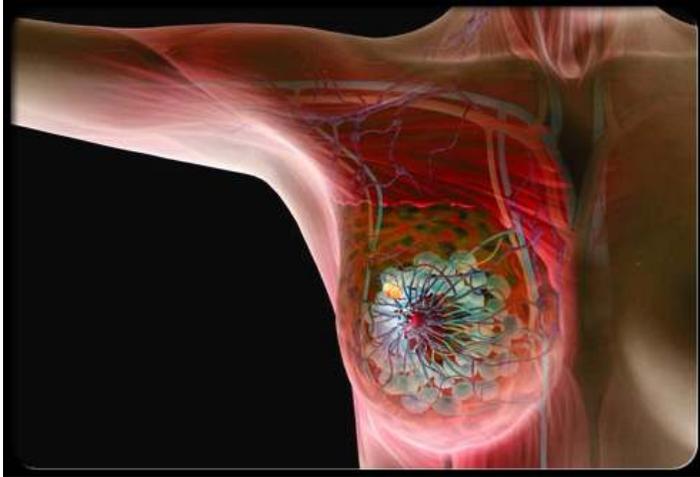
More Support

In a randomized, controlled clinical trial in the department of the Osler Chest Unit, Churchill Hospital, Oxford, England, twelve matched pairs of patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease received either traditional acupuncture or placebo acupuncture over a three-week treatment period. After treatment, the traditional acupuncture group showed a significant improvement in terms of subjective scores of breathlessness and six-minute walking distance. Kim Jobst at Oxford University conducted a parallel study of the efficacy of acupuncture on asthma. This study also showed improvements by two measures: "quality of life" scores, and breathlessness measurements.

These clinical trials at Oxford indicate that acupuncture treatments achieved the following goals: reduced the spasmodic tendency in the bronchi; kept the lungs from contracting at the least little irritant in the air; opened narrowed blood vessels in the lungs; and promoted relaxation and the ability to breathe more fully.

CHINESE HERBAL APPROACH TO BREAST CANCER

According to current scientific theory, breast cancer is believed to result from a series of



alterations in the genes of breast cells. A cancerous tumor may develop for several years before it can be detected. Signs and symptoms of breast cancer include a lump, swelling, discharges from the nipple, tenderness, indentation of the nipple, or a dimpled appearance of the breast skin.

The most frequently-cited factors in developing breast cancer are hormones, age, and family history. The risk of breast cancer increases with age. Statistics on the relative risk of developing breast cancer with age show that one woman in

19,608 at the age of twenty-five, one woman in 50 at the age of fifty, and one woman in ten at the age of eighty develops breast cancer. Women who began menstruation early (age 11 or younger) or who reach menopause late (age 55 or older) are at higher risk for breast cancer. Some women inherit genes that are more susceptible to the alterations that can lead to breast cancer.

Today, the standard therapies for breast cancer include surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, hormone therapy, and autologous bone marrow transplants. These therapies are often used in combination, and they are the best hope for breast cancer sufferers. But these powerful treatment modalities also produce significant side effects, and coping with the side effects can be as emotionally difficult as coping with the cancer itself. It is precisely in this area of dealing with the side effects of cancer therapy that traditional Chinese medicine is most useful and effective. The combination of acupuncture, herbal medicine and dietary modifications can greatly improve the overall health and well-being of the cancer patient. In China, this marriage of modern Western therapies with ancient healing techniques is the normal approach to treating cancer.

Breast Cancer in Chinese Medicine

In classical traditional Chinese medical literature, breast cancer is called "Ru Yan," or "breast stone." Chinese medicine believes that the fundamental cause of breast cancer is emotional disturbances such as excessive thinking or anger, which lead to functional disorders of the Liver and Spleen. A common causative pattern is that excessive Heat from a deficient liver, combined with Phlegm Dampness due to Spleen dysfunction, results in the blockage of Chi and Blood, which then "condenses" into breast cancer. Another common causative pattern is when Liver Deficiency and Kidney Deficiency lead to Chi and Blood Deficiency. Chronic Chi and Blood deficiency then leads to Qi Stagnation and Blood Stasis, which causes the formation of lumps in the breast. A third pattern is when Qi Stagnation and Phlegm accumulation lead to excessive Heat toxins, which then turn to hard breast lump masses.

Breast cancer was believed to be one of the "four fatal diseases" in traditional Chinese medicine before the modern surgical operations, chemotherapy, and radiation therapy were invented. The condition of "breast stone" was diagnosed and treated, of course, with traditional surgery, acupuncture, and herbal formulas, but the results were often disappointing. However, the Chinese tradition of close observation and painstaking collation of symptoms and cures provides us with extensive information on the diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer. Traditionally, four patterns of breast cancer are differentiated and treated: Liver Qi

Stagnation (hard masses without pain and redness); Phlegm Heat Obstruction (hard masses with sharp pain and redness and swelling); Liver Kidney Deficiency (hard lumps with swelling and a dimpled appearance of the breast skin, discharges and indentation of the nipple); Qi Blood Deficiency (hard lumps with swelling, ruptured abscesses, spreading to the surrounding areas).

Herbal Approach to Breast Cancer

Modern research on herbal treatment for cancer-related health issues has produced evidence that the following traditional Chinese medicine herbs are very effective when used by experienced practitioners. They represent four areas of treatment that are particularly important to breast cancer patients.

1. **Herbs for Depressing Cancer Cells:** The leading herb in this category is *Tulipa edulis* (Shan Ci Gu). The active ingredient in *T. edulis* (Shan Ci Gu) is colchicine.
2. **Herbs with Anticancer Properties:** The herbs in this group include herbs for cleansing the body of Heat toxins such as *odlenlandia* (Bai Hua She She Cao), *lobelia* (Ban Zhi Lian), and *rhizoma paridis* (Qi Ye Yi Zhi Hua); and herbs for eliminating Blood Stasis such as *rhubarb* (Da Huang), *notoginseng root* (Tian Qi), *bugleweed* (Ze Lan), and *pycnostelma* (Xu Chang Qing)
3. **Herbs for Immunity:** Immune system enhancing herbs include *astragalus* (Huang Qi), *ligustrum seed* (Nu Zhen Zi), *cordyceps sinensis* (Dong Chong Xia Cao), *gynostemma pentaphyllum* (Jiao Gu Lan), *polyporus* (Zhu Ling), and *reishi* (Ling Zhi).
4. **Herbs for Preventing Alterations:** Three herbal seeds have the function of preventing the alterations in breast cell genes that can lead to cancer: *ligustrum seed* (Nu Zhen Zi), *cuscuta seed* (Tu Si Zi), and *lycii fruit* (Gou Qi Zi).

TCM Patterns Seen After Conventional Therapies

Once a woman has been diagnosed with breast cancer, and depending on what stage the cancer is in, the following standard treatments are recommended: Surgery (lumpectomy, simple mastectomy, modified radical mastectomy) removes the cancer and some or all of the surrounding tissue. Radiation therapy uses high-powered X-rays to kill cancer cells and shrink tumors. It helps to prevent the recurrence of cancer. Chemotherapy uses powerful anticancer drugs to destroy cancer cells that invade other parts of the body. Hormone therapy uses estrogen-blocking drugs such as tamoxifen to prevent estrogen from binding to cancer cells and stimulating the cancer cells to grow. Autologous bone marrow transplant (for extremely aggressive breast cancers) removes the bone marrow, makes sure it is free of cancer, and then injects it back into the body after the high-dose chemotherapy regimen is complete. Statistics indicate that the overall mortality rate from breast cancer has not changed appreciably in forty years, despite new drugs and surgical techniques, according to Dr. Christianne Northrup. For patients who choose conventional therapies, the side effects of these therapies must always be addressed. Patients are best served by having a speedy recovery from cancer therapy, and by having a strong health maintenance program after recovery. In China, the vast majority of cancer patients use traditional Chinese medicine along with conventional therapies during and after cancer treatment. In this country, more and more cancer patients are discovering the benefits of complementary care.

Traditional Chinese medicine differentiates and addresses three common patterns in post-conventional-therapy patients.

Chi Blood Deficiency

Research shows that patients with the pattern of Chi Blood Deficiency have a lower cell immunity response than normal people. Symptoms of Chi Blood Deficiency include: hair loss; dizziness; fatigue; a thin body; shortness of breath; poor appetite; insomnia; palpitations; abdominal pain with menstruation; a pale complexion; loose stools; scanty urine; a pale tongue with a white tongue coating; and a deep-thin-weak pulse. The herbal formulas *Chi Blood Tonic (Ba Zhen Tang)*, and *Immunenergy (Shi Quan Da Bu Wan)* are used with this pattern.

Immunenergy (Shi Quan Da Bu Wan)

Astragalus (Huang Qi)
Cinnamon (Rou Gui)
Ginseng (Ren Shen)
Atracylodes (Bai Zhu)
Poria (Fu Ling)
Angelica (Dang Gui)
Cnidium (Chuan Qiong)
Peony (Bai Shao)
Rehmannia (Shu Di Huang)
Licorice (Gan Cao)

Chi Yin Deficiency

Studies show that patients with Lung Chi Deficiency have a lower lymphocyte transformation rate and lower levels of seroimmunity globulins such as IgM and IgG. Symptoms for the Chi Yin Deficiency pattern include: sweating; palpitations; shortness of breath; insomnia; chest congestion; cough without phlegm; lassitude; dry mouth; a thin tongue coating; and a thin pulse. *Chi Yin Tonic (Sheng Mai Yin)* is a leading formula to enhance the immune system in the Chi Yin Deficiency pattern.

Chi Yin Tonic (Sheng Mai Yin)

Ginseng (Ren Shen)
Lilyturf Root (Mai Men Dong)
Schizandra Fruit (Wu Wei Zi)

Dryness with Heat Toxins

A serious concern of cancer patients is the toxins that are generated in the body by conventional therapies. Symptoms of the Dryness with Heat Toxin pattern include: swelling and pain after conventional treatments; nausea; vomiting; constipation; dark yellow urine; a red tongue with a yellow coating; and a rapid pulse. *Toxin-Relieving Formula (Fu Zheng Jie Du Chong Ji)* is a good herbal formula to address these side effects.

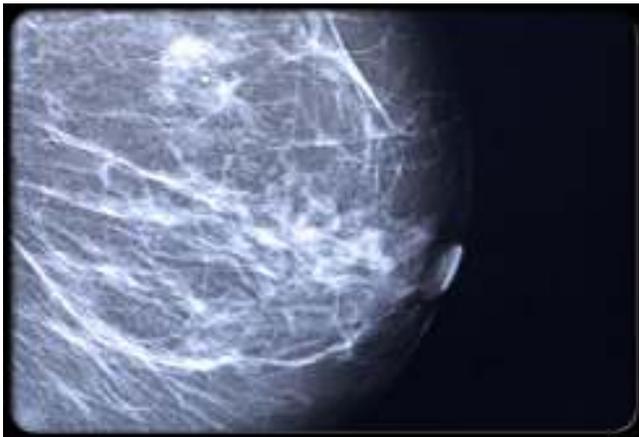
Toxin-Relieving Formula (Fu Zheng Jie Du Chong Ji)

Honeysuckle (Jin Yin Hua)
Forsythia (Lian Qiao)
Snakegourd Root (Tian Hua Fen)
Dendrobium Stem (Shi Hu)
Astragalus (Huang Qi)
Millettia Stem (Ji Xue Teng)
Atractylodes (Bai Zhu)
Poria (Fu Ling)
Tangerine Peel (Chen Pi)
Chicken-Gizzard Skin (Ji Nei Jin)
Lycii Fruit (Gou Qi Zi)
Ligustrum Seed (Nu Zhen Zi)

BREAST LUMPS AND THE "LIVER CONNECTION"

An Option from Traditional Chinese Medicine

Breast lumps or cysts are the most common reason for women to seek medical consultation in the United States. Like every other part of our bodies, our breasts are subject to various types of problems. Breast lumps can occur in women of any age, but are more common in middle age. Although the majority of breast lumps are benign or non-cancerous, women still experience the discomfort of tenderness, pressure or distention within the breast. Conventional medicine provides women with a variety of treatments for breast lumps. Traditional Chinese medicine, which has accumulated abundant experience and knowledge in treating and preventing breast



lumps over its long history, is another option for achieving and maintaining healthy breast tissue.

Understanding Breast Lumps

Breast lumps fall into two categories: benign lumps or cysts, and malignant tumors. Breast lumps are frequently, but not always, associated with the conditions of premenstrual breast distention, infertility, irregular periods, and menopausal syndrome.

- **Breast Cysts** are fluid-filled sacs that may develop in the breast. Breast cysts may cause breast pain. The most common conventional medical interventions are to withdraw fluid from the cyst with a needle, or to surgically remove the cyst if necessary.
- **Fibrocystic Breasts** normally contain small, nodular lumps and cysts. Most of these lumps and cysts are located in the upper, outer area of the breasts. Although most women with fibrocystic breasts do not have an increased risk of developing breast cancer, women who have fibrocystic breasts are more likely to develop breast cysts.
- **Fibrous Breast Lumps** are small, solid, non-cancerous lumps that are composed of fibrous and glandular tissue. Fibrous breast lumps usually appear in young women. These lumps can be removed surgically, but they often recur.
- **Breast Cancer** is a malignant, hard, stony lump or mass in the breast. Breast cancer may start from the milk glands, milk ducts, fatty tissue, or connective tissue. Statistics indicate that one out of eight women will develop breast cancer at some time in her life. Conventional treatments include surgery, radiation therapy, chemotherapy, and hormone-blocking drugs.

In traditional Chinese medical theory, benign breast lumps or cysts are classified as Ru Pi (breast nodule), while malignant breast tumors are classified as Ru Yan (breast stone). Even the earliest Chinese medical literature had records for diagnosing and differentiating the patterns of both Ru Pi (breast nodule) and Ru Yan (breast stone). In the following section, we will focus exclusively on non-cancerous breast lumps.

Breast Lumps and the Liver Connection

Jane is an artist and free-lance writer. Whenever she has an argument with her husband about his ongoing affair with his former girlfriend, swelling lumps appear in her breasts, and she experiences distention and tenderness in her breasts. Jane visits my clinic regularly for help with her emotional and physical complaints. Breast lumps are extremely susceptible to emotional disturbance.

Chinese medicine believes that the diagnostic pattern called "Liver Qi Stagnation" is the mechanism primarily responsible for the development of breast problems, including breast lumps. In traditional Chinese medicine, the two main functions of the Liver are to store the Blood and to regulate Qi. The Liver regulates Qi by promoting its free flow, and encouraging smoothness of flow. When the Liver is dysfunctional, Qi does not flow freely and smoothly, and Liver Qi Stagnation is one result. Chinese medicine considers emotions to have a very powerful effect on the functioning of the internal organs, and strong or unresolved emotions can damage the organs with which they are associated. Although anger is the primary emotion associated with the Liver, the Liver is responsible for keeping all the emotions in a state of smooth flow. Therefore, when there is emotional stress or psychic trauma, and the Liver is overwhelmed, several types of Liver dysfunction can result, among which is Liver Qi Stagnation. Among the possible Liver disorders, Liver Qi Stagnation stands out sharply as the main cause of breast lumps. One reason for this is that the Liver meridian (energy pathway) is connected by internal pathways to the breasts. Liver Qi Stagnation based in emotional stress is especially common among women, and traditional Chinese gynecology places a lot of emphasis on keeping the Liver on an even keel. Regulating the Liver, soothing the Liver, cleansing the Liver, calming the Liver, and softening the Liver through Chinese herbal medicine, acupuncture and dietary therapy are common treatment strategies in the practice of traditional Chinese medicine gynecology.

Patterns of Breast Lumps and Leading Herbs for Treatment

The following four patterns are differentiated for non-cancerous breast lumps.

1. **Qi Stagnation.** Emotional problems are the main cause of this pattern of breast lumps. Symptoms of this pattern include: growing lumps with dull pain; enlarging or shrinking lumps with emotional disturbance; depression; a feeling of distention under the rib cage; a thin white tongue coating; and a wiry or thin-choppy pulse. The leading Chinese herbs for treating this pattern include immature tangerine peel (Qing Pi), bupleurum (Chai Hu), nut-grass rhizome (Xiang Fu), melia fruit (Chuan Lian Zi), and vaccaria seed (Wan Bu Liu Xing).
2. **Phlegm Accumulation.** The excessive consumption of dairy products, fats and sweets leads to this pattern of breast lumps. Symptoms of this pattern include: variably-sized lumps with no pain or slight pain; dizziness with a feeling of heaviness; no appetite; thick or puffy tongue body; and a deep, wiry and slippery pulse. The leading Chinese herbs for resolving Phlegm include atractylodes (Bai Zhu), poria (Fu Ling), and Job's tears (Yi Yi Ren).
3. **Excessive Heat.** The habitual consumption of greasy, hot, spicy foods, deep fried foods and alcohol, or long-standing anxiety or anger lead directly to the Excessive Heat pattern of breast lumps. Symptoms of this pattern include: lumps with burning pain; irregular periods; hot flashes; anxiety; dizziness; disturbing dreams; red tongue tip; and a deep-thin-wiry-rapid pulse. The leading Chinese herbs for eliminating the Excessive Heat pattern include peony bark (Mu Dan Pi), gardenia (Zhi Zi), gentiana (Long Dan Cao), coptis (Huang Lian), and skullcap (Huang Qin).
4. **Chronic Disharmony.** Chronic illness, or slow recovery from surgery or childbirth are the sources of the Chronic Disharmony pattern of breast lumps. Symptoms of this pattern include: growing and disappearing lumps with menstrual cycles; breast distention; irregular periods; lassitude; dark eyelids; insomnia; back pain; pale-red tongue; and "soggy" pulse. The leading Chinese herbs for balancing the Chronic Disharmony pattern include astragalus (Huang Qi), rehemannia (Di Huang), angelica (Dang Gui), and Fu Ti (He Shou Wu).

Top Herbal Formulas for Breast Lumps

Mood Smooth (Jia Wei Xiao Yao San) is a classical formula which functions to harmonize the Liver and the Spleen. It has been in use for a thousand years. It is one of the favorite herbal formulas among women in China and other Asian countries. It is used to relieve breast lumps, and is also widely used to soothe mood fluctuations, relieve depression, and treat the symptoms of premenstrual syndrome. Like many other traditional Chinese herbal formulas, this formula also reflects the underlying philosophy of treating the whole body instead of concentrating on one part while ignoring or hurting another part.

Mood Smooth (Jia Wei Xiao Yao San)

Bupleurum (Chai Hu)
Mint (Bo He)
Angelica (Dang Gui)
Peony (Bai Shao)
Atractylodes (Bai Zhu)
Poria (Fu Ling)
Licorice (Gan Cao)
Ginger (Sheng Jiang)
Peony Bark (Mu Dan Pi)
Gardenia (Zhi Zi)

LumpEASE is a formula which was developed recently by Dongzhimen Hospital (affiliated with Beijing University of Traditional Chinese Medicine), and has already won wide acceptance and acclaim from women in China who suffer from breast disorders. Literally translated as "Breast Lumps Disappearance," this formula is widely used and sold in every hospital and pharmacy in China.

LumpEASE (Ru Kuan Xiao) Salvia Root (Dan Shen)

Citrus Seed (Ju He)
Vaccaria Seed (Wan Bu Liu Xing)
Eupolyphaga (Tu Bie Chong)
Melia Fruit (Chuan Lian Zi)
Honeylocust Spine (Zao Jiao Ci)

FIGHTING CANCER WITH SOY AND OTHER POPULAR CHINESE FOODS

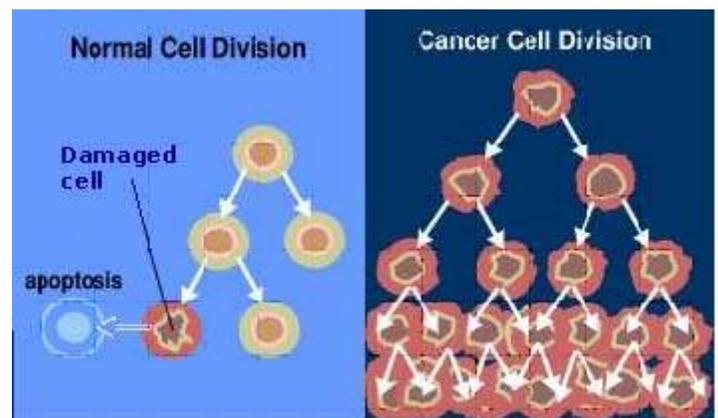
One out of three people alive today in the United States will ultimately die of cancer. More and more often, people in this country, including health professionals, are questioning the conventional treatments for cancer. Are surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation therapy the only options for cancer patients? Interestingly, since surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation therapy became the standard treatments for all cancer patients, data indicates no improvement in either the incidence of cancer or the survival rate. Many people are now turning to Eastern medicine to try to find an answer. Increasing numbers of people ask me how Chinese medicine deals with cancer: if there is hope for a cure, and what preventive methods are used.



We all know that many types of cancers are diet-related. It is estimated that 60% of cancers in women are diet-related. Evidence shows that some foods increase the likelihood of developing cancer, while others reduce the likelihood of developing cancer. In Chinese medicine, diet is considered to be a major factor in cancer prevention. Many foods have been tested scientifically and found to contain anti-cancer agents. Some of the most exciting research has been done on soy beans and soy food products.

Soy beans are considered to be one of the five sacred foods in China. For a typical Chinese family, every meal includes soy foods: soy milk for breakfast; tofu salad at lunch; tofu and vegetable stir-fry for dinner. Even at a formal banquet, you would see many soy-based dishes, often marinated with garlic, sesame, soy sauce, or ginger. Soy products can be easily made into noodles, breads, and snack foods, and are wonderful substitutes for meat, chicken, eggs, and cow's milk.

Although Asian people have long claimed that soy foods promote increased health and longevity, it is only recently that Western researchers got around to performing scientifically controlled, double-blind studies on soy beans and their chemical constituents. When Asian scientists pointed out that cases of breast cancer and prostate cancer are significantly lower in Asian countries than in Western countries, and attributed this fact to diet; and when it was further pointed out that American women who consume soy foods have a fifty-percent lower incidence of cancer than women who don't eat soy, many Western scientists decided it was time to investigate these phenomena.



So far, it has been discovered that soy beans contain at least five known anti-cancer agents, including protease inhibitors, phytoestrogens, saponins, and genistein. People have aware for decades that soy beans contain protease inhibitors, but it was thought that protease inhibitors interfered with proper digestion, so they were actually removed from all soy products produced in the United States.

Only now are protease inhibitors recognized as valuable cancer fighters that inhibit tumor growth by inhibiting the action of certain enzymes that promote tumor growth.

Most people, including most health professionals, had never heard about genistein until 1993, when Dr. Herman Adlercreutz's research on prostate cancer was cited in the *Wall Street Journal*. Genistein, a type of phytoestrogen, blocks the signal that triggers normal cells to become cancer cells, and is extremely effective in stopping the growth and spread of prostate cancer. Scientists have speculated that genistein may even be used as a cancer treatment. Although more than three hundred plants contain phytoestrogens, only soy beans produce genistein.

Phytoestrogens, which are heavily concentrated in soy, seem to create a favorable hormonal environment which prevents certain cancers from developing, especially breast cancer. The phytoestrogens in soy have a similar chemical structure to the estrogen produced by the body, but phytoestrogens are considered to be "weaker" than the body's natural estrogen. "Strong" estrogens which bind to the body's estrogen receptors are recognized as being a triggering mechanism in the development of breast cancer. Unfortunately, the women in "advanced" countries have not only their naturally-produced estrogen to deal with, but also the strong estrogens that come from the environment, from water, from meat, or leached into our foods and beverages from plastic containers. When soy is consumed, the natural weaker estrogen in the soy binds with the body's estrogen receptors, thus leaving fewer estrogen receptors available for the risky, stronger estrogen which is then discharged harmlessly from the body. The faster strong estrogens are metabolized and discharged, the less damage they can cause. Until recently, soy beans have been under-appreciated in this country, and are often associated with animal fodder or extreme poverty. When I first came to America, I would extol soy foods to my patients, only to be met with skepticism. "Soy beans? That's cow food," said one. A journalist told me he had eaten a lot of soy foods when he was a poor student. It is a big challenge for Americans to switch from meat and potatoes to tofu and soy milk, but health-conscious people are beginning to change. Increasingly, people come to my clinic for consultations on cooking and eating soy foods. I have heard of women who rushed out to the grocery store to buy soy when they heard about its potential to prevent breast cancer. I am so glad that people here in the United States have finally begun to recognize the benefits of these "Cinderella beans."

Now that a variety of soy products are available in many city markets, it is well to recognize that some of them contain more phytoestrogens than others. In order to enjoy the maximum benefit from soy foods, I recommend that you purchase organically-grown soy beans whenever possible, and learn to make your own soymilk at home. Included in this section is a recipe for soymilk, as well as a delicious vegetable stir-fry recipe.

Making Soymilk at Home

Step 1. Preparing the soybeans: Soak 1 cup of dried soybeans with three cups of cold water, 8 hours.

Step 2. Grinding the soybeans: Grind the soaked soybeans in a blender at high speed for one minute into a fine slurry, half cup of soaked soybeans with 3 cups of water.

Step 3. Straining the soymilk: Use a piece of nylon mesh to strain the soymilk into a pot or a large bowl.

Step 4. Cooking the soymilk: Cook the soymilk on a medium flame, boiling it for 5-10 minutes.

Step 5. Flavor the soymilk (if you like), and keep it in the refrigerator. Drink it every day.

Nutritious and delicious.

Besides soy products, other cancer-preventing foods which are popular in China include green tea, cabbage, shiitake mushrooms, garlic, kelp, carrots, and cauliflower.

Green Tea, the most popular drink in China, Japan and other Asian countries, contains powerful anti-cancer substances called catechins. Many studies show that green tea can dramatically block the development of various cancers. Epigallocatechin gallate (one of the most potent catechins) is found in the highest concentrations in green tea. People confuse green tea with black tea, Oolong tea, Jasmine tea, and many other Asian teas. All tea is made from leaves picked from the same plant □ the difference is in the processing. Green tea leaves are simply picked and sun-dried; other teas are either fermented or cooked. It is the lack of processing that makes green tea contain the most potent anti-cancer agents. A leading physician, Dr. Hirota Fujiki, at Japan's National Cancer Center Research Institute, claims that drinking green tea could be one of the most practical methods of cancer prevention available to the general public at present.



Cabbage, the most popular vegetable in the northern part of China, can be found in many traditional dishes, including stir-fry vegetables and dumplings. The Chinese value it, not only for its good taste, but also for its wonderful anti-cancer effect. Studies show that cabbage can speed up the metabolism of estrogen in the body. It is thought that slower metabolism of estrogen promotes breast cancer. Another very interesting study done on cabbage concerned guinea pigs who received high doses of radiation. The study showed that all of the guinea pigs who were exposed to high levels of radiation and did not have cabbage in their diet died; but the group of guinea pigs who ate cabbage had a very high survival rate. This study indicates that cancer patients who are receiving radiation therapy would be wise to include substantial portions of cabbage in their diet.



Shiitake Mushroom. This brown and beefy-tasting mushroom has been used in Asian gourmet cooking for centuries as a substitute for meat. Its taste and texture are very different from that of regular mushrooms. It has gained fame as an immune system booster, widely recommended to cancer and AIDS patients. The biochemical in the shiitake mushroom that has been proven to augment immune system activity is called lenitan. Today it is possible to find shiitake mushrooms in many supermarkets and Asian groceries in the dried form. Fresh ones are also available in some co-ops. Shiitakes are delicious and can be prepared in a variety of ways: cooked or steamed with rice or noodles; or added to stir-fry and soups.



Garlic. As a food and a spice, garlic is used widely in both the East and the West. Scientific studies show that garlic can "deactivate" carcinogens, prevent the growth of cancerous tumors, and stimulate the formation of glutathione which detoxifies foreign materials. Garlic contains allicin which has antibiotic and anti-fungal properties. People call it a natural chemotherapy drug because of the way it destroys cancerous cells. It is especially preventive of colon and stomach cancers. One of garlic's components, ajoene, is very toxic to malignant cells. The maximum benefit is achieved by eating raw garlic.



Kelp is a sea weed which tops the list of therapeutic Chinese foods for its anti-cancer properties. It is rich in many minerals and other special nutrients such as iodine. Traditional Chinese medicine believes that kelp can soften and reduce hard masses. It is also popularly used for weight control in China. It is so popular in Asian cuisine that it is considered a necessity in the Chinese and Japanese diet. Kelp soap, kelp shampoo, and kelp hair conditioners are extensively used in modern China.



Carrots. Most people already know that carrots contain high levels of beta carotene, and that beta carotene has an anti-cancer effect. Carrots are widely consumed around the world, but in many countries, especially in the West, people eat them raw. Experiments show that eating lightly-cooked carrots is much more beneficial than eating raw carrots, which confirms the ancient wisdom in traditional Chinese medicine. Traditional Chinese medicine practitioners have always recommended that their patients eat lightly-cooked carrots in order to get the best nutritional absorption. Recent research by Dr. Xiangdong Wang at Tufts University shows that beta carotene can change in the human body into a substance called retinoic acid, which is widely used to treat cancers.



Cauliflower. In ancient times, Chinese medicine texts set out the theory that foods which look like tumors have an anti-tumor effect. In the West, the theory that "like treats like" is called the "Doctrine of Signatures." Cauliflower, which looks exactly like a cancer tumor, has long been a folk remedy against cancer. Recently, its effects on cancer have been proven scientifically: it contains many cancer-fighting, hormone-regulating compounds, and is especially good for the prevention of breast and colon cancers.



An Anti-cancer Recipe: Chinese Stir-fry Vegetables

Ingredients

- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon of vinegar
- 1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger root
- 1 teaspoon sliced garlic
- 2 cups sliced cabbage
- 2 cups sliced shiitake mushroom
- 1 cup sliced carrot
- 1 cup fresh soy bean sprouts

Preparation

Heat a wok with olive oil. Add ginger root and garlic and stir-fry for one minute. Add cabbage, carrot, shiitake mushroom and soy bean sprouts and stir-fry for 4 minutes. Add vinegar and soy sauce and stir-fry for a few seconds. Serve with rice.

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE FOR CANDIDIASIS

Candidiasis has become a "hot" topic over the past few years among health-conscious individuals in the United States. Candidiasis is a condition that results from the overgrowth of a



yeast-like fungus called *Candida albicans*. *Candida* cells are part of the normal flora of our bodies found in our mouth, vagina, intestines, and other organs. When they grow unchecked, they can cause a number of health problems, including digestive disorders, fatigue, and vaginal yeast infections. Whether candidiasis is to be considered a disease or a syndrome is still controversial in conventional medicine, but the general public has accepted it as a valid disease, apart from lab tests or theoretical constructs. Some practitioners even claim that

"everybody has it." Almost every day in my clinic, people walk in asking for help with this problem. Although Chinese medicine does not have a traditional diagnosis of "candidiasis," we can find a diagnostic framework and a treatment approach to candidiasis from the patients' common symptoms and complaints. I do not believe that "everyone has it," but it is a very common problem in the United States. Many Chinese medicine practitioners are amazed by how prevalent candidiasis is here. When you know the causes of candidiasis, it is not surprising that people are more prone to have it here than in other countries.

There are a number of medications that promote the overgrowth of yeast cells, either because they kill beneficial bacteria, or because they interfere with normal hormone functions. These medications include: antibiotics; chemotherapy; hormone replacement; corticosteroids; and oral contraceptives. Improper diet, such as over-consumption of yeast products, sugar, or alcohol, also can promote yeast growth. In traditional Chinese medicine, these foods disturb the balance of the Spleen, produce Phlegm, and create the perfect environment for yeast overgrowth.

Those people with immune system or endocrine gland disorders are more prone to candidiasis, such as patients with AIDs, cancer, or diabetes.

In Chinese medicine, balance is the most important concept in maintaining health. Yin and Yang, the eternal opposites of the universe, also form the basic substance of our bodies. They must be in balance for us to be in good health. It is the same for the yeast cells and bacteria in our bodies: too many yeast cells, and a condition of candidiasis results; too many bacteria, and infection can be present; when there is balance, we are in good health.

Triple Burner: A Concept in Traditional Chinese Medicine

The Triple Burner is one of the six Yang organs in the body. It includes the Upper Burner (the Heart, and Lung), Middle Burner (the Spleen and Stomach) and Lower Burner (the Liver, Intestines, Bladder and Kidneys). As stated in the classical medical textbook, *Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine*, "the Upper Burner opens outwards, spreads the five tastes of the food essences, moistens and pervades the skin, fills the body, and is like mist. The Middle Burner receives vital energy, expels the wastes, steams the body fluids, transforms the refined essence of food, and connects upwards with the Lungs. The Lower Burner directs the separation of the clean fluids from the dirty fluids, and facilitates the excretion of urine." Notice that the Triple Burner is described in terms of what it does. It is called a "concept" because it really exists as a function, rather than as a physical organ. In Chinese medicine, the Triple Burner regulates the activities of the other internal organs and participates in fluid metabolism.

Traditional Chinese medicine recognizes the development and proliferation of *Candida* in the body as a Triple Burner-related condition. The Middle Burner, and particularly the Spleen, is seen as the key to this health issue. The Spleen is responsible for taking the food and fluids that we ingest and processing them into the Chi and Blood that are the true "fuel" of our bodies. When the Spleen is functioning well, Chi and Blood are in balance, intestinal flora are in balance, there is no excess fluid or phlegm in our system, food is properly digested and distributed, and the immune system is being nourished by Chi and Blood. In most cases of candidiasis, the problem starts with a Spleen imbalance, which may then progress to digestive disorders, irregular bowel movements, diarrhea, constipation, and/or fatigue. In the absence of treatment, or with improper treatment, the disorder will then spread from the Spleen and Spleen meridian to other organs and meridians. At this stage, the condition will be diagnosed as a systemic yeast infection. When the Spleen system is weakened, Damp Heat accumulates in the Lower Burner, and an ideal environment for yeast overgrowth is developed. Symptoms such as a white, cheesy vaginal discharge, genital itching, or vaginitis might occur. When the Spleen system is disturbed, Heat and Fire can accumulate in the Upper Burner, causing an infection of the oral cavity called thrush to develop.

With candidiasis, there are cases when symptoms only appear in one Burner; but in many cases, symptoms spread to all three Burners. As explained above, Middle Burner disorder (Spleen and Stomach) is the key factor in candidiasis. When Spleen energy is weakened by poor diet, medications or other factors, its ability to transform phlegm and nutrients is diminished. The Spleen then fails to properly absorb and utilize nutrients from the foods we eat, and is therefore unable to produce healthy amounts of Chi and Blood. So the earliest stage of candidiasis is almost always a Spleen (Middle Burner) disorder. If treated appropriately at this stage, with re-balancing of the Spleen and Stomach, the problem will resolve with no yeast-related symptoms. But candidiasis is not a well-defined disease pattern. It is difficult to diagnose at the early stages, and many people are completely unaware that they are developing a severe problem. Then the disease gains ground, spreading to the Upper Burner (thrush, cough, etc.), or to the Lower Burner (vaginal infection, etc.), or both. As with many diseases, the best way to head off trouble is with early detection and treatment.

A Two-Step Treatment Plan with Chinese Medicine

Step 1. Cleansing

In Chinese medicine, a thorough cleansing is the first step in dealing with candidiasis. When our systems are full of the waste, phlegm and toxins which contribute to yeast overgrowth, clearing them out of the system is necessary. "The constitutional energy is endangered when an internalized evil is there," says the *Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine*.

Many people try to clear out their yeast overgrowth with diet cleansing methods. For candidiasis, diet management alone is not strong enough to clear the system, or it can take a very long time. Combining proper diet with Chinese herbs and acupuncture can achieve this goal much faster. With herbal cleansing therapy, the goal is to clear the system of Dampness, Phlegm, and Heat. These are seen as the causative factors of candidiasis. The herbs are not intended to mechanically clear out the large intestine; rather, they promote the clearing-out of the pathological factors of Phlegm and Heat toxins. Commonly-used herbs include gentiana (long dan cao), melia (chuan lian zi), agastachis (huo xiang), cardamon (bai dou kou), saussurea (mu xiang), skullcap (huang qin), coptis (huang lian), and phellodendra (huang bai).

Damp Heat Clearing Formula (Long Dan Xie Gan Wan) and **Coptis Formula** (Huang Lian Shang Qing Wan) are powerful herbal combinations to promote the cleansing process. **Damp Heat Clearing** is used most often when Lower Burner symptoms appear, and also with some Middle Burner problems; **Coptis Formula** is more effective with Upper and Middle Burner symptoms.

Damp Heat Clearing Formula (Long Dan Xie Gan Tang)

Gentian (Long Dan Cao)
Scullcap (Huang Qin)
Gardenia (Zhi Zi)
Akebia (Mu Tong)
Plaintain (Che Qian Cao)
Alisma (Ze Xie)
Buplerum (Chai Hu)
Rehmannia (Di Huang)
Angelica (Dang Gui)
Licorice (Gan Cao)

Coptis Formula (Huang Lian Shang Qing Wan)

Coptis (Huang Lian)
Da Huang (Rhubarb)
Scullcap (Huang Qin)
Phellodendra (Huang Bai)
Gypsum (Shi Gao)
Gardenia (Zhi Zi)
Forsythia (Lian Qiao)
Chrysanthemum (Ju Hua)
Schizonepeta (Jing Jie)
Angelica (Bai Zhi)
Vitiscis (Man Jing Zi)
Cnidium (Chuan Qiong)
Ledebouriella (Fang Feng)
Mint (Bo He)
Inula (Xuan Fu Hua)
Platycodon (Jie Geng)
Licorice (Gan Cao)

Some commonly-used acupuncture/acupressure points for this cleansing process include LIV3, LIV2, ST40, UB57, and LI4.

Step 2. Tonifying

After the waste, toxins, and phlegm have been cleared out of our systems, we then have to tonify our bodies, repairing the damage and restoring the balance, or the pathological factor(s) will return. "If sufficient vital energy exists, a pathological factor cannot attack us" (*Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine*). This is also a very important step to prevent recurrence of yeast infections. Commonly used tonifying herbs include astragalus (huang qi), codonopsis (dang shen), atractylodes (bai zhu), and dioscorea (shan yao). **GI Strength Formula** (Xian Sha Liu Jun Zi Tang) is a popular formula for tonification, especially of the Middle Burner.

GI Strength Formula (Xiang Sha Liu Jun Zi Tang)

Ginseng (Ren Shen)

Atractylodis (Bai Zhu)

Poria (Fu Ling)

Licorice (Gan Cao)

Tangerine (Chen Pi)

Pinella (Ban Xia)

Amomi (Sha Ren)

Saussurea (Mu Xiang)

Commonly used tonifying acupuncture/acupressure points include ST36, SP9, SP6, LI10, LIV8, REN6, and REN4.

A Recommendation for Your Diet

People who are familiar with a yeast-free diet stay away from bread, cheese, mushrooms, vinegar, soy sauce, barbecue sauce, black fungus, and white fungus. But there are other yeast-based foods such as crackers, pretzels, dry cereal, miso, tempeh, canned vegetables, pickled vegetables, beer, root beer and other fermented beverages which are often overlooked by those with yeast infections.

Grains, noodles, non-yeast bread and white rice are recommended. They are easy to digest. Brown rice and wild rice have more nutrients than white rice, but they take more energy to digest, and it is better for Spleen Chi Deficient people not to eat them often. Certain vegetables are extremely therapeutic for those with yeast infections, such as Daikon radish, which can help cleanse your system and is known as a "phlegm cleanser".

The family of yellow-colored foods such as yam, winter squash, and pumpkins are strongly recommended from the viewpoint of traditional Chinese medicine, as they tonify and strengthen the Spleen and Spleen meridian.

Yeast-based medications such as penicillin, mycin, chloromycetin, and tetracyclines should be avoided, as well as yeast-based Vitamin B supplements.

A TRADITION OF OVERCOMING CHRONIC PELVIC PAIN

For many women, chronic pelvic pain (CPP) is an ongoing nightmare - a health problem that



they have to live with every day for months or years. Sometimes their doctors know why they suffer from this pain, but can do nothing to relieve it. Even more frustrating are the cases where conventional medicine can find no organic cause for the pain. These women are often given anti-depressants and told the problem is in their mind.

CCP Case Studies

To illustrate the forms that chronic pelvic pain (CPP) can take, I will present four case studies of patients who came to my clinic. Then I will discuss these cases from the perspective of traditional Chinese medicine.

Elaine, 36, has been suffering from CPP for five years. Initially, she was told that the pain was due to endometriosis, and she had two surgeries to try to correct the problem. When that surgery was unsuccessful, the doctor recommended a total hysterectomy, which Elaine had done three years ago. At first the pain was better, but within a few months after having the hysterectomy, the pain was not only back, but was even worse than before. Now the pain is so severe that Elaine is almost disabled by it. She can't work, and spends much of her time in bed, holding her abdomen. She has seen many practitioners for pain control over the last three years, but nothing has worked for her. When she came to see me, she cried and said, "I'm just too young to be in this kind of pain." I diagnosed Elaine in Chinese medicine terms as a case of Blood Stagnation, and treated her with acupuncture and a Chinese herbal formula. After a few weeks, her pain began to decrease.

Karen is a single woman in her early 40s. She has suffered with CPP for more than fifteen years. According to her doctor, it began with a vaginal infection which traveled into her Fallopian tubes. She has been taking antibiotics, one after another, for many years, and still the pain from this "infection" persists. Because of the pain, Karen cannot hold a job for more than a few months. She is anxious and depressed, and can't sleep, so she also takes sleeping pills and anti-depressants. Her case falls into the Chinese medicine category of Damp Heat.

Jenny is a nurse with two children. Both of Jenny's children were born C-section, and it was after the second delivery that she began to have pelvic pain. She was told that it would be better in a few months, so she waited a few months, and then waited a few more months, but the pain never diminished or went away. Now it has been nine years. She has been to see internists, surgeons, a gynecologist, and a gastroenterologist, but no one can explain why the pain persists. One of the surgeons suggested that it was possible that some nerves had become trapped in the scar tissue from her last C-section. The pattern that Jenny exhibits is Chronic Deficiency.

Jody has been looking for answers about CPP for a decade. After a series of doctors and specialists could find nothing wrong with her, she was referred to a psychiatrist, who prescribed anti-depressants. Once Jody had been diagnosed with a mental condition, conventional physicians didn't want to see her anymore. They would just shake their heads and say there was nothing they could do for her. One time, when she was suffering from extreme pain, Jody went to see her gynecologist. Before she was done explaining her symptoms, the doctor interrupted her and told her he had heard enough, there was nothing he could do for her, and the only thing he could tell her to do was to go home and take

her anti-depressants. At this point, even Jody's husband and family didn't believe that she had chronic pain. Every day, Jody had to live with pain that no one believed in and no one could help her with. In Chinese medicine theory, Jody falls into the pattern of Liver Chi Stagnation. Based on these cases, you can see that CPP can result from a number of conditions including endometriosis, tubal infections, C-sections, gynecological surgery, chronic cystitis, and physical or sexual abuse. Sometimes, no reason at all can be discovered for the pain. Additional symptoms that women with CPP may complain of include backaches, lethargy, headaches, heart palpitations, nausea, sexual difficulties, depression, anxiety, and insomnia.

Traditional Chinese Medicine for CCP

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) is a very complex and comprehensive system of medicine that has a three-thousand year history in China. When a patient comes to see a Chinese medicine practitioner, the practitioner listens to the patient's history, makes observations, looks at the tongue, and feels the pulse. Diagnosis is based on a consideration of all the signs and symptoms, and is expressed as a pattern, such as the patterns of Blood Stagnation, Damp Heat, Chronic Deficiency, and Liver Chi Stagnation mentioned above. The exact treatment prescribed for the patient is based on the pattern diagnosis, but most treatment consists of acupuncture, Chinese herbal formulas, and advice on dietary changes and lifestyle considerations.

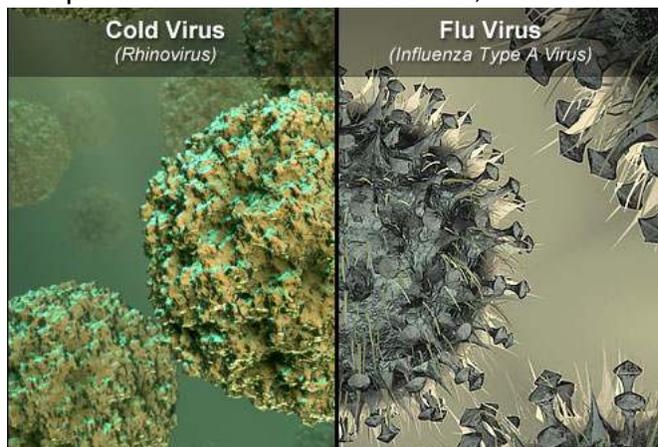
Some cases of chronic pain seem to begin with a definite incident, such as Karen's original infection, or Jenny's C-section. Others come about gradually, with increasing discomfort over a period of months or years, and are often the result of poor diet or unexpressed emotions. Because Chinese medicine is holistic, the practitioner considers the emotional and lifestyle background of each patient to be as important as their physical symptoms. This approach is especially useful in a case such as Jody's, when Western doctors can't find any organic cause. Liver Chi Stagnation is a condition that is generally based in emotional issues, especially unexpressed anger. The Liver is responsible for the smooth flowing of emotions and blood through the body, and when its energy is blocked, people can have symptoms of anxiety, high blood pressure, abdominal pain, indigestion, and menstrual problems.

Karen's Damp Heat condition may have resulted entirely from her original infection, but it is likely that she was predisposed to it because she was used to eating dairy, greasy, deep-fried foods, spicy foods, or alcohol. These types of foods overwhelm the Spleen's energy, and once the Spleen is unable to digest food properly, symptoms of Damp Heat can linger in the body for years.

With each of these cases of CPP, acupuncture, herbal formulas, and diet modifications improved the health and outlook of the women. While chronic conditions take longer to treat successfully than acute conditions, each of these women now understands her problem better, and feels optimistic that the worst is over, and good health is within her grasp.

DEFEATING COLD AND FLU WITH CHINESE MEDICINE

We are most vulnerable to colds and influenza during the long winter, Many people suffer not only from the respiratory symptoms of cold and flu, but can also fall victim to various complications of these diseases, some of which can be serious. Children, the elderly, and



people with chronic illness or compromised immune systems are especially prone to complications. Parents worry about their children bringing home infections from school. Right now, the best way Western medicine has of dealing with these diseases is the widespread use of flu shots, which encourage the immune system to "gear up" for the most prevalent type of flu. However, while flu shots can avert the most serious consequences of infection, they cannot prevent or cure the common cold.

The common cold is an acute viral infection that generally causes inflammation of the upper respiratory tract. It is the most common infectious disease in humans, and accounts for more time lost from work or school than any other disease. Flu is an acute and contagious infection of the respiratory tract. Its symptoms include running nose, cough, chills, headache, fever, and severe aching in the muscles and joints. Although flu affects all age groups, schoolchildren have the highest incidence. Although colds and flu are generally of brief duration, they can lead to complications in the very young, the elderly, and those with chronic diseases or compromised immune systems.

Because both cold and flu are viral infections, conventional medicine has no cure for them. Bed rest and increased fluid intake are generally suggested to make the patient more comfortable. Aspirin, nasal decongestants, and other medications such as steam inhalation, acetaminophen, ibuprofen, naproxen, amantadine, or rimantadine are prescribed.

A friend of mine traveled to China last winter. She told me that when she visited a college there, she saw every student in the cafeteria drinking a kind of herbal tea for the prevention of cold and flu before their lunch. She thought that was very interesting and asked me what they were drinking. I told her that every school in China, from grade school through college, offers herbs to the students during the flu season to prevent cold and flu. There are quite a few teas and herbal formulas available for prevention purposes.

In China, these anti-cold and flu formulas will be found in every family's medicine cabinet. It would be almost impossible to find a person in China who has never taken one. Most of these effective and time-tested herbal formulas come from two important schools in traditional Chinese medicine: the school of cold-induced febrile diseases, represented by Zhang Zhong jing (150-219 AD), and the school of seasonal febrile diseases, represented by Wu Jutong (1758-1836).

Using herbal formulas to prevent and treat colds and flu is one of the best-developed and most successful aspects of traditional Chinese medicine. Specific treatment practices and formulas have been handed down unbroken from the earliest schools to the modern universities of China. In this country, more and more people are becoming aware of the existence and efficacy of the ancient cold and flu formulas. At our clinic, TCM Health Center, we see increased demand for this type of treatment, especially among school teachers, who are constantly being exposed to colds.

Our clients say that their doctors have been surprised by the effectiveness of *Cold & Flu Formula* (Yin Qiao San), which is a common and popular formula in China.

Top Antiviral Herbs in Chinese Medicine

- **Wood Root (Ban Lan Gen)** is one of the leading anti-viral herbs. In a study of over 11,000 people who were exposed to mumps, the infectious manifestation was forestalled by using a decoction of wood root. Wood root tea is the most popular herbal tea to prevent and treat flu in China.
- **Wood Leaf (Da Qing Ye)** shares similar properties with wood root. In a study of 100 people, only 10% of the treatment group that took a wood leaf decoction twice daily had upper respiratory infections during the study period, while 24% of the control group had infections.
- **Forsythia Fruit (Lian Qiao)** is a pointed, oval-shaped capsule with a hard shell. Because of its anti-viral, anti-bacterial, anti-inflammatory and immunity-enhancing properties, forsythia fruit is widely used to treat common cold, influenza, swelling and pain in the throat, and skin inflammation.
- **Honeysuckle Flower (Jin Yin Hua)** is named "gold-and-silver flower" in Chinese. Research indicates that this flower bud can deactivate the PR8 strain of influenza virus. The study also indicates that honeysuckle works wonderfully to treat other infectious diseases, including pneumonia and viral conjunctivitis.
- **Baical Skullcap Root (Huang Qin)** is the dried root of scutellaria. It is an anti-viral agent, effective against influenza viruses. This herb and its active substance, baicalin, are used in the treatment of upper respiratory infections, either bacterial or viral.
- **Effective Herbal Formulas in Chinese Medicine**
- In traditional Chinese medicine, patterns are differentiated according to the imbalances of the body and the causes and stages of the disease. Herbal formulas (combinations of herbs) are always recommended by practitioners because they are stronger and more effective than single herbs. I will discuss three patterns of cold and flu symptoms, and the appropriate formulas for each type.
- **Wind-Heat Pattern:** Symptoms of the Wind-Heat pattern include: fever; headache; sweating; a running nose with yellowish-colored mucus; dry mouth; thirst; sore throat; productive coughing with thick yellowish phlegm; a thin, yellow tongue coating; and a floating and rapid pulse. *Cold and Flu Formula* (Yin Qiao San) is the most popular herbal formula to treat the Wind-Heat pattern. *Wind-Heat Clearing* (Sang Ju Yin) and *Lung Heat Clearing* (Ma Xing Shi Gan Tang) are also basic formulas for cold and flu of the Wind-Heat pattern.

Cold & Flu Formula (Yin Qiao San)

Forsythia (Lian Qiao)
Honeysuckle (Jin Yin Hua)
Platycodon (Jie Geng)
Mint (Bo He)
Bamboo Leaf (Dan Zhu Ye)
Licorice (Gan Cao)
Schizonepeta (Jing Jie)
Soy Bean (Dan Dou Gu)
Arctium (Niu Bang Zi)

Wind-Cold Pattern: Symptoms of Wind-Cold pattern include: aversion to cold; mild fever; absence of sweat; chest congestion; sneezing; running nose with clear mucus; itching throat, or a cough with clear mucus; a thin, white tongue coating; and a tight pulse. *Wind-Cold Formula* (Jiu Wei Qiang Huo Tang) is commonly used for cold and flu of the Wind-Cold type. Among others, *Cinnamon Decoction* (Gui Zhi Tang), *Minor Blue Dragon Decoction* (Xiao Qing Long Tang), and *Cnidium and Tea Formula* (Chuan Qiong Cha Tiao San) are also widely used.

Wind-Cold Formula (Jiu Wei Qiang Huo Tang)

Notopterygium (Qiang Huo)
Ledebouriella (Fang Feng)
Cang Zhu (Atractylodes)
Asari (Xi Xin)
Cnidium (Chuan Qiong)
Dahurian Angelica (Bai Zhi)
Rehmania (Shen Di Huang)
Skullcap (Huang Qin)
Licorice (Gan Cao)

Deficiency Pattern: Most people with chronic illness fall into the Deficiency category. They are the targets of cold and flu during every seasonal change and in every flu season. Their energy is low, their immune systems are weak, and they have trouble recovering from prolonged illness. Women with a Deficiency condition often catch a cold before every menstrual cycle. When Deficiency-pattern people are hit by cold or flu, they should use either *Cold & Flu Formula* or *Wind-Cold Formula*, depending upon whether their illness falls into the Wind-Heat type or the Wind-Cold type. Once cold or flu symptoms are gone, other formulas can be taken to strengthen the immune system and prevent recurrence of disease. *Immunenergy* (Shi Quan Da Bu Wan) is a well-known tonic for the immune system. *Chi Spleen Tonic* (Bu Zhong Yi Qi Wan), *Spleen Heart Tonic* (Gui Pi Wan), *Kidney Yin Tonic* (Liu Wei Di Huang Wan) and *Kidney Yang Tonic* (Jin Gui Shen Qi Wan) are also popular formulas which tonify the immune system. Consult a Chinese medicine practitioner to determine the best formula for you.

Immunenergy Formula (Shi Quan Da Bu Tang)

Angelica (Dang Gui)
Cnidium (Chuan Qiong)
Peony (Bai Shao)
Rehmannia (Shu Di Huang)
Ginseng (Ren Shen)
Atractylodes (Bai Zhu)
Poria (Fu Ling)
Licorice (Gan Cao)
Astragalus (Huang Qi)
Cinnamon (Rou Gui)

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE FOR DEPRESSION

Today, it is estimated that five million Americans are taking Prozac. Unfortunately, over the last seven years there have been 31,000 reports of adverse reactions to this powerful drug. More and more people struggling with depression are beginning to ask, "Is there any safe, effective treatment that I can use regularly without worrying about side effects? What is the natural way to deal with depression?"



In my clinic, TCM Health Center, we are often asked the same question by patients, psychologists, psychiatrists, and other health professionals: "How do Chinese, Japanese, and other people from Asia deal with depression?" Prozac is not familiar to most Chinese, not even the health professionals in China. Many popular anti-depression drugs are not available in hospitals in China. It is not that the Chinese experience less stress than Americans do: it is very hard to avoid stress in today's world, no matter where we live. But people in China deal with stress and emotional problems differently: they get acupuncture treatments and take herbal formulas instead of looking to drugs.

Chinese medicine incorporates centuries of experience in dealing with depression. The first medical book, *The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine*, which was written 2300 years ago, contained theories on the origins of depression. In Chinese medicine, mental or emotional problems such as depression are attributed to an imbalance or blockage in one or more of the internal organs (Zang/Fu) and the energy pathways (meridians) that pertain to them. Some common patterns that can manifest as depression are Liver Chi Stagnation, Spleen Chi Deficiency, Kidney Essence Deficiency, or Lung and Heart meridian disorder. Generally, people begin by experiencing an imbalance in one organ or meridian. Untreated, or improperly treated, the disorder will spread, involving other organs and meridians. Chinese medical doctors emphasize early diagnosis and early preventive treatment of imbalances.

Traditional Chinese medicine, including acupuncture, is a safe and effective way to deal with depression. Acupuncture, herbal formulas, and other Chinese medical modalities have been used in China for over 5000 years, but have only recently become mainstream in the United States in the last twenty-five years. The people who come to my clinic looking for help with their depression, are typically those who have already tried everything else. Often they have tried seven or eight different anti-depressant prescriptions, with disappointing results. Either the drugs didn't work, or the side effects were too unpleasant, or they didn't want to take anti-depression drugs for the rest of their lives. Almost every one of my patients feels that acupuncture has definitely improved their quality of life. A number of scientific studies also supply a great deal of evidence on how and why acupuncture can help depression. A clinical study has shown that patients who received acupuncture treatments experienced significant reduction in depression symptoms. After treatment, more than half no longer met the criteria for clinical depression. Statistically, that makes acupuncture just as effective as antidepressants. Studies also show that acupuncture can change the levels of many neurotransmitters, such as serotonin, that profoundly affect mental states.

Chinese herbal therapy

The Chinese herbal formula *Mood Smooth* (Jia Wei Xiao Yao Wan) has been in use for six hundred years in China to deal with depression. The Chinese call this old remedy "the happy pill" because of its well-known anti-depressant effect. I call it "China's natural Prozac." It has been used by millions of people over the centuries, and is especially popular with

women. Other common remedies for depression include Spleen tonic herbal formula *Chi Spleen Tonic* (Bu Zhong Yi Qi Wan), Kidney nourishing herbal formula *Kidney Yang Tonic* (Jin Gui Shen Qi Wan), and many other remedies that are widely used with different patterns of depression. When you come to a Chinese medicine clinic, the practitioner will evaluate you first, and tell you what kind of imbalance and/or deficiency you have from the Chinese medicine point of view. Then he or she will decide what is the best herbal remedy for your depression.

Mood Smooth (Jia Wei Xiao Yao Wan)

Buplerum (Chai Hu)
Mint (Bo He)
Angelica (Dang Gui)
Peony (Bai Shao)
Atractylodes (Bai Zhu)
Poria (Fu Ling)
Licorice (Fu Ling)
Ginger (Sheng Jiang)
Peony Bark (Mu Dan Pi)
Gardenia (Zhi Zi)

Kidney Yang Tonic (Jin Gui Shen Qi Wan)

Aconite (Fu Zi)
Cinnamon (Gui Zhi)
Rehmannia (Shu Di Huang)
Cornus (Shan Zhu Yu)
Dioscorea (Shan Yao)
Alisma (Ze Xie)
Peony Bark (Mu Dan Pi)
Poria (Fu Ling)

Dietary Therapy

Every one knows that certain vitamin or mineral deficiencies can play a very important part in depression, such as deficiencies in Zinc, Vitamin C, Folic Acid, Vitamin B-12, and Vitamin B-6. Because of the vital part that nutrition plays in our overall health, including mental health, dietary evaluation is another important part of Chinese medicine. Chinese medicine practitioners will often ask patients to keep a three-to-five-day dietary intake record, in order to evaluate factors in the diet which can be contributing to depression. Certain foods such as daikon radish, sesame seeds, soybeans, and kelp are highly recommended for depression patients. Other foods such as coffee and alcohol should be avoided.

Chinese medicine works holistically. A good Chinese medicine practitioner will always give you a complete evaluation including what kind of deficiency or imbalance you have, which energy pathway is blocked, what foods to eat or avoid, and how these things relate to your mental health. I hope that anyone who feels the need of it will benefit from this natural and safe medicine.

DERMATOSIS AND TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE

As the body's largest organ, skin is vulnerable to many diseases. Almost everyone experiences some sort of skin disease in their life. Every year, twenty-five percent of Americans seek help from physicians or dermatologists due to skin problems. Conventional dermatology has made a significant contribution over the years to the health of our skin, but for those skin disorders which are not responsive to conventional medicine, and for those patients who prefer more natural methods of treatment, the ancient tradition of Chinese medicine provides a safe and effective alternative.



Skin problems arise from a number of causes, the most common of which are infections, overexposure to sunlight, parasites, toxic substances, hormonal imbalance, cell dysfunction, and stress. It is standard procedure in traditional Chinese medicine to assess the patient's symptoms and then to classify the disease as a particular "pattern," based on whether it is of internal or external origin, shows signs of heat or cold, is an excess or deficiency condition, etc. In Chinese medicine, external pathological factors such as Wind, Dampness, Dryness, or Heat can invade the body and cause skin disorders. Internal imbalances are differentiated into patterns such as Blood Stasis, Disharmony of Liver and Kidney, or Blood Deficiency, and are often reflected on the skin. When skin problems are generated by internal imbalance, the underlying problem must be addressed, in order to clear up the surface manifestation.

Chinese Herbal Medicine

Chinese herbal medicine has built up a sophisticated system for treating skin disorders, using both external and internal administration. There are hundreds of herbal formulas available for skin conditions such as herpes, eczema, and psoriasis. In this article, I introduce one of the most popular herbal formulas, *Three Yellow Cleanser* (San Huang Xi Ji), which is commonly used for a variety of skin disorders. This time-tested formula has been in use for a thousand years. If you were to open a Traditional Chinese Medicine dermatology textbook, you would find this herbal formula recommended for over 60% of skin diseases. Generally speaking, Chinese cleansing herbs are considered bitter herbs with a "cold property," as are all four of the cleansing herbs in this formula. The medicinal functions of three of these four herbs were recorded in the earliest classic of Chinese herbal medicine, *Divine Husbandman's Classic of the Materia Medica*, written during the Warring Kingdoms period (475BC-206BC). Because "yellow" ("huang" in Chinese) is in three of these four herb names, (dai huang, huang qin, huang bai), the formula is called "Three Yellow Cleanser." The ancient protocol for this formula is "clearing Heat (Qing Re), stopping itching (Zhi Yang) and arresting secretion (Shou Se)."



Three Yellow Cleanser Formula (San Huang Xi Ji)

Rhubarb (Dai Huang)
Sophora (Ku Shen)
Phellodendron (Huang Bai)
Skullcap (Huang Qin)

Extensive modern pharmacological research has been done on the herbs in this formula in regard to their effectiveness as antibacterial, anti-viral and anti-fungal agents. The antibiotic effect of skullcap (huang qin) has been confirmed to be effective against many pathogenic bacteria including *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Streptococcus pneumoniae*, *Corynebacterium diphtheriae*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, and *Neisseria meningitidis*. Clinical research indicates that phellodendron (huang bai) is very effective in treating eczema around the

ears; and local external application of rhubarb (dai huang) is effective in the treatment of stomatitis, oral ulcers, and folliculitis, especially those caused by *Staphylococcus aureus*.

Decoctions of sophora (ku shen) have an *in vitro* inhibitory effect against common dermatomycoses (fungal infections). Anecdotes about the successful use of these herbs are recorded in the classical medical texts of China, and successful clinical trials of the herbs are recorded in modern medical journals.

Skin Disorders Treated with "Three Yellow Cleanser"

The following skin disorders can be treated by the *Three Yellow Cleanser* formula. The name in parenthesis is the traditional Chinese medicine name of the disease.

- **Eczema (Shi Chuang)** is a common hypersensitive and inflammatory dermatosis. People of all ages may suffer from eczema. It may occur all over the body or only on certain areas of the body.
- **Herpes Simplex (Pao Zhen)** is an acute herpetic dermatosis caused by the *simplex* herpetic virus, characterized by dermatomucosae joining one another, and local and clustered vesicles. Areas such as lips, nostrils, cheeks and external genitalia are often attacked. Common symptoms are itching, burning, erythema, reddish vesicles, scabs, suppuration and pain.
- **Herpes Zoster (Chan Yao Huo Dan)** is an acute viral infection characterized by clusters of vesicles, and pain along the nerves. It often appears around the ribs in the shape of a belt. It most commonly manifests in the spring and fall.
- **Acne (Fen Ci)** Teenagers, with their rapid growth and hormonal changes, are frequently plagued by acne. Twenty percent of all skin disorders are acne, which is the leading complaint of patients seeking treatment for skin diseases.
- **Insect Dermatitis (Chong Yao Pi Yan)** is an inflammatory skin disease caused by insect bites or stings which irritate the skin. Bites from mosquitoes, ants, ticks, mites, centipedes, and fleas might precipitate this problem.
- **Contact Dermatitis (Jie Zhu Xing Pi Yan)** is an inflammatory response of the skin or mucous membrane due to contact with irritating materials. *Three Yellow Cleanser* works well for cases which exhibit rashes and papular eruption.
- **Drug Rash (Yao Wu Xing Pi Yan)** is an inflammatory reaction of the skin to oral, injected, or externally-applied chemicals or drugs. The shape of the skin rash is varied. There are many types of drug rash such as urticaria type, scarlet type, etc.
- **Erythema Multiform (Duo Xing Xing Hong Ban)** is a type of acute inflammatory skin disease characterized by redness, papular eruption, or vesicles. It occurs most often in the winter and spring. Itching and burning are common symptoms.
- **Pityriasis Rosea (Feng Re Chuang)** is an acute skin disease characterized by macular eruption and desquamation (peeling skin). It attacks the torso and extremities of the body. It occurs most often in the spring and fall.

- **Pruritus Cutis (Feng Sao Yang)** is an itching skin disease without skin lesions. It is a common disease of adults and the elderly. Scratch marks, bloody scabs, abnormal pigmentation and lichenoid changes may appear due to scratching the itching areas.
- **Psoriasis (Niu Pi Xuan)** Eight million Americans are affected by psoriasis, which results from the over-production of skin cells and is characterized by thickening and scaling of the skin.
- **Erysipelas (Dan Du)** Is an acute infection of the skin characterized by sudden onset of local bright red coloration and swelling. It spreads rapidly.

I have found that Three Yellow Cleanser works wonderfully for the above skin disorders when used externally. When internal and external herbal therapy are combined with acupuncture, and based on traditional Chinese medicine diagnosis, there can be significant improvement in symptoms, or even complete relief.

How to Use "Three Yellow Cleanser"

- **Powder:** Grind the herbs into powder or buy powders from a Chinese herbal pharmacy. Use 10 to 15 grams of each herb. Mix the powder with 100 ml of distilled water and 1 ml of medicinal phenol. Mix them evenly. Use cotton swabs to dip in the mixture and apply it to the skin. Repeat application four to five times a day until healed.
- **Decoction:** In a glass or enamel pan, combine the herbs with 1 - 2 cups of water and bring to a boil, then reduce heat to a medium flame and simmer for twenty minutes. Strain the liquid out and save it. When the liquid has cooled, use cotton swabs to dip in the liquid and apply to skin. You may spread a bit of pure petroleum jelly over the affected area to protect it between applications of the cleansing formula. Use the decoction four to five times a day until the skin is healed.

Because these herbs can cause a very strong local reaction, I strongly recommend that you consult a practitioner who is thoroughly trained in Chinese herbal medicine before you decide to treat your skin problems with traditional Chinese medicine.

Acupuncture/Acupressure for the Skin

Some commonly used acupuncture points for skin disorders are listed in the box. You can do self-acupressure on these points to prevent skin diseases and maintain your health. These points have the functions of stopping itching, relieving pain, calming the spirit, eliminating inflammation, regulating blood vessel dilation and constriction, and treating endocrine disorders.

Commonly Used Acupuncture/Acupressure Points for Dermatosiis:

Arm Points:

LI-11 (Qu Chi)

LI-4 (He Gu)

LU-7 (Lie Que)

Leg Points

SP-9 (Yin Ling Quan)

SP-6 (San Yin Jiao)

SP-10 (Xue Hai)

Torso Points:

BL-13 (Fei Shu)

BL-15 (Xin Shu)

BL-17 (Ge Shu)

BL-20 (Pi Shu)

Dietary Considerations

For a traditional Chinese medicine practitioner, the consultation or treatment is only half done if he or she doesn't ask about the client's diet and make dietary recommendations. Although it is best to tailor diets on an individual basis, there are some general guidelines to go by. On the whole, people with skin disorders should avoid alcohol, fish, shrimp, and crab. Leafy green vegetables and fruits are strongly recommended.

DYSMENORRHEA AND PAIN CONTROL

Dysmenorrhea refers to cyclical abdominal pain which is experienced during or before menstruation. It occurs most typically in young women two to three years after the onset of menstruation. Menstrual pain will take the form of cramping, lower abdominal pain, lower back pain or a pulling sensation in the inner thighs. Pain is often accompanied by headaches, dizziness, vomiting, nausea, diarrhea or constipation. This is a common health problem for women all over the world.



Lisa is a nurse who works for Allina in a conventional medicine clinic. She has been affected by menstrual pain most of her adult life, and has had to skip three days of work every month for the last fifteen years. Over the years she has tried all kinds of prescription pain killers and over-the-counter pain relievers. Finally, a doctor recommended that she see an acupuncturist. She was skeptical at the beginning, but she came to see me on one of her "miserable" days, and experienced relief from the very first acupuncture treatment. I recommended that she have two treatments every month before her menstruation. Three month's acupuncture treatments and an herbal formula, StagnationEASE (Xue Fu Zhu Yu Tang), turned her from a skeptic to a firm believer.

Conventional medicine uses the term "primary dysmenorrhea" for pelvic pain that is the normal result of having a period, and the term "secondary dysmenorrhea" for pain during menstruation which is caused by an abnormal condition such as endometriosis, fibroids, or pelvic inflammatory disease. Ibuprofen or Naproxen are two of the over-the-counter pain relievers for menstrual pain which are commonly recommended by doctors. Birth-control pills and some stronger prescription medications also reduce menstrual pain, but with these there can be unwanted side effects. The way conventional medicine manages menstrual pain is to block the formation of prostaglandins, a substance that is produced abundantly by the body during menstruation.

In Chinese medicine, menstrual pain, like other forms of pain, is caused by one or more of the following diagnostic patterns: blockage of Qi and Blood; deficiency of Qi and Blood; retention of Heat, Dampness or Wind; or imbalance of Kidney and Liver. The goal of treatment (both herbal and acupuncture) is to tonify the deficiencies, open the blockage, remove the excesses and regulate the internal organs.

Dysmenorrhea and Pain Management in Chinese Medicine

In Chinese medicine, pain is the symptom of a deeper problem. The root cause of pain can be either an Excess (Shi) pattern or a Deficiency (Xu) pattern. The blockage of Qi and Blood, or the retention of Heat, Dampness or Wind, are Excess patterns. Deficiency of Qi and Blood, or imbalance of Kidney and Liver are Deficiency patterns. Blockage of Qi and Blood causes pain; imbalances of the internal organs cause pain; blockage of the meridians causes pain. Figuring out the source of the pain is the key to diagnosis and treatment. Non-fixed pain is attributed to a Wind pattern. "Chilly" pain is associated with a Cold pattern. Heavy and swollen pain is associated with a Dampness pattern. Sharp pain is associated with a Blood Stasis pattern. Stomach pain and back pain are attributed to retention of Cold in the Middle. Dull pain is associated with a Blood Deficiency pattern. Pain with redness, swelling and heat is associated with a Heat pattern. Joint pain with leg soreness is attributed to Kidney Deficiency. Chinese medicine practitioners use acupuncture and herbal medicine to relieve pain through one or a few of the following strategies: expelling Wind; dissipating Cold; eliminating Dampness; moving Qi; invigorating Blood; nourishing the Blood; clearing the Heat; tonifying the Kidneys.

Differentiating the patterns of menstrual pain depends on analyzing the timing, nature, location, intensity, color, volume and quality of the menstrual cycle and discharge, and "reading" the tongue, pulse, and associated symptoms. Generally speaking, menstrual pain before the period indicates an Excess pattern, whereas menstrual pain after the period indicates a Deficiency pattern. Aversion to pressure on the abdomen indicates an Excess pattern, and feeling relief when pressure is applied to the abdomen indicates a Deficiency pattern. Sticky menses with dark-red color indicates an Excess pattern. Feeling relief after passing menstrual blood clots indicates a Blood Stasis pattern. Abdominal pain with hypochondriac distention indicates a Qi Stagnation pattern. Thin menses of a pale-red color, and experiencing pain after the period indicates a Qi and Blood Deficiency pattern. Experiencing "cold" abdominal pain, and passing small, dark blood clots indicates a Cold pattern. Thin menses of a pale-red color, and experiencing back soreness indicates a Kidney-Liver Deficiency pattern.

Treatment of Dysmenorrhea with Herbal Medicine

Dysmenorrhea is effectively treated with Chinese herbal medicine and acupuncture. The most important of the herbal menstrual pain relievers, angelica (Dang Gui) and corydalis tuber (Yan Hu Suo), are either used in a single herb form or in combination with other herbs in a formula. Following are the most typical patterns of dysmenorrhea with the herbs most commonly prescribed to treat them:

- **Qi Stagnation and Blood Stasis Pattern:** Abdominal pain before and during menstruation; menses of a purple or dark color, with small volume and blood clots; decreased pain after passing blood clots; purplish spots on the tongue; and a wiry-choppy-strong pulse. Herbs used: aurantium fruit (Zhi Ke), lindera root (Wu Yao), and cyperus tuber (Xiang Fu) are used to regulate the Qi. Cnidium (Chuan Qiong), persica seed (Tao Ren), and safflower (Hong Hua) are used to invigorate the Blood. One of the popular herbal formulas is BlockageEASE (Ge Xia Zhu Yu Tang).
- **Deficiency Cold Pattern:** Abdominal pain during or after menstruation; feeling better when pressure and/or warmth are applied to the abdomen; pale, watery menses with small volume; soreness of the lower back and legs; long-drawn-out urination with a thin stream; a white tongue coating, and a deep pulse. Herbs used: Cinnamon bark (Rou Gui) and evodia bark (Wu Zhu Yu) are two herbs that warm the pelvic area (uterus). One of the widely used herbal formulas is "Warming Menses Formula" (Wen Jing Tang).
- **Cold Dampness Pattern:** Abdominal pain before or during periods; application of warmth reduces pain; dark-colored menses with blood clots; aversion to cold; cold limbs; white or white-sticky tongue coating; and a wiry-tight or wiry-slippery pulse. Herbs used: Cinnamon bark (Rou Gui), fennel seed (Xiao Hui Xiang), and dry ginger (Gan Jiang) are three major "warm property" herbs that can remove Dampness from the system. StagnationEASE (Shao Fu Zhu Yu Tang) is a popular formula for this pattern.
- **Damp Heat Pattern:** Abdominal pain before menstruation; aversion to heat; soreness and distention of the lower back; a feeling of heat in the abdomen or a low grade fever; menses that are sticky, with a dark red color and blood clots; a burning sensation when the menses flow out; yellow and sticky vaginal discharge; scant urine; a red tongue body, with a yellow-sticky tongue coating; and a wiry-rapid or slippery-rapid pulse. Herbs used: Coptis (Huang Lian), and peony bark (Mu Dan Pi) are two leading herbs for clearing Damp Heat. "Heat-Clearing Blood-Regulating Decoction" (Qing Re Tiao Xue Tang) is a very standard formula for this pattern of dysmenorrhea.

- **Qi Blood Deficiency Pattern:** Abdominal pain after menstruation; dull abdominal pain; menses that are thin, with a pale color and small volume; tiredness; loose stools; pale complexion; pale tongue body; and a thin-weak pulse. Herbs used: Ginseng (Ren Shen), astragalus (Huang Qi), angelica (Dang Gui), and rehmannia (Di Huang) are the leading Qi and Blood tonic herbs. "Chi Blood Tonic" (Ba Zhen Tang) is a time-tested formula for the Qi Blood Deficiency pattern of disease.
- **Kidney Liver Deficiency Pattern:** Dull abdominal pain after menstruation; sore back; menses that are pale, with small volume; dizziness; ringing in the ears (tinnitus); poor memory; insomnia; a flushed face; hot flashes; a dark-red tongue body; and a deep-thin pulse. Herbs used: Angelica (Dang Gui) and white peony root (Bai Shao) nourish the Blood and Liver. Cornus fruit (Shan Zhu Yu) is a Kidney and Liver tonic. "Liver Tonic" (Tiao Gan Tang) is recommended.

Treatment of Dysmenorrhea with Acupuncture

Besides using herbal formulas to treat dysmenorrhea, acupuncture is another viable way to treat menstrual pain. Acupuncture can open the blockage of Qi and Blood, balance the internal organs, and clear the blockage of meridians. Scientific studies find the following mechanisms for pain relief: acupuncture stimulates the production of endorphins, blocks the transmission of pain signals, and increases adrenocorticotrophic hormone. In order to test these historical and modern claims about the effectiveness of acupuncture in treating dysmenorrhea, a clinical trial was organized at the Gynecology Clinic of the Kaiser-Permanente Medical Center in Oakland, California. Forty-three women with primary dysmenorrhea were followed for one year. Patients were randomly assigned into one of four different groups: the Real Acupuncture Group (RA); the Placebo Acupuncture Group (PA); the Standard Control Group (SC); and the Visitation Control Group (VC) with the following treatments: appropriate acupuncture treatment was provided to the RA Group; Random Point acupuncture treatment was provided to the PA Group; no acupuncture or medical intervention was provided to the SC Group; non-acupuncture visits with physicians were provided to the VC Group. The following results were demonstrated: 10 of 11 (90.9%) showed improvement in the RA Group; 4 of 11 (36.4%) showed improvement in the PA Group; 2 of 11 (18.2%) showed improvement in the SC Group; and 1 of 10 (10%) showed improvement in the VC Group. There was reduction of analgesic medication used by the women in RA Group, but no change or increased use of medication in other groups.

A NATURAL OPTION FOR ENDOMETRIOSIS

Endometriosis has become an increasingly common health condition worldwide. One



American doctor has labeled it "the career woman's disease" because there seems to be a strong correlation between endometriosis and the increased stress levels experienced by so many working women today. Health professionals and their patients are raising many questions about endometriosis: "Why do so many women have endometriosis?" "What causes endometriosis?" "Are there any natural treatment options for my endometriosis?" Endometrial tissue occurs naturally in the endometrium - a layer of tissue lining the uterus. With endometriosis, however,

this tissue "migrates" to other parts of the reproductive system, or outside of the reproductive organs altogether, and can be found in the uterine wall, ovaries, rectovaginal pouches, uterosacral ligaments, and even in the abdominal cavity.

The main clinical manifestation of endometriosis is a recurrent, generally cyclical, lower abdominal pain that gets progressively worse. Dysmenorrhea, irregular periods, painful intercourse, fever during menstruation, dysfunctional vaginal bleeding, nipple discharge, abdominal masses, and infertility may also be associated with endometriosis. It is estimated that 15 percent of menstruating women between the ages 25 and 44 have endometriosis. Up to 50 percent of infertile women may have endometriosis, and some studies suggest that this estrogen-sensitive disease may also cause infertility.

A Woman's Story and Endometriosis

Valerie is a 35-year-old single woman. She began to have unusual menstrual pain about five years ago when she was riding a bicycle while she had her period. Recently, her menstrual pain became severe, spreading to the vagina, anus, hips, and inner side of the thigh. A "sinking" sensation in the anus, with abdominal pain and back soreness accompanied the menstrual pain. Often, the pain was severe enough to trigger bouts of nausea and vomiting, and she became desperate for relief. She went to her regular doctor, who referred her to a gynecologist. The pelvic examination, magnetic resonance imaging and laparoscopy confirmed that she had endometriosis. The gynecologist suggested a hysterectomy, but she refused. She asked for other options. The doctor told her that "acupuncture is effective to relieve pain. Why don't you try it?" She came to my clinic. After three month's treatment with acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine, her endometriosis was under control.

Standard treatment choices for endometriosis include surgery that removes as much misplaced endometrial tissue as possible; hysterectomy (surgical removal of the uterus, often with the fallopian tubes and ovaries); and drugs such as progestins, Danazol, GnRH agonists and combination estrogen-progestin oral contraceptives which suppress the activity of the ovaries and slow the growth of endometrial tissue. Surgery is often only a temporary measure, because endometriosis recurs in most women. Treatment with synthetic hormones will suppress the symptoms of endometriosis, but the disease itself is not cured, and symptoms will often return after discontinuing the hormone therapy. Besides, the side effects with these drugs can be significant.

Blood Stasis Patterns of Endometriosis in Chinese Medicine

A traditional Chinese medical diagnosis is arrived at by discerning a characteristic pattern from the signs and symptoms presented by the patient. In Chinese medicine, the primary pattern, or mechanism, that causes endometriosis is Blood Stasis. Blood Stasis can be caused by emotional disturbance, chronic illness, exposure to cold temperatures, surgery, and genital infections. When the pattern of disease is Blood Stasis, the objective of the treatment is to invigorate Blood and remove stasis, using both acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine.

The most frequently used herbs for dispersing Blood Stasis are: salvia (Dan Shen); red peony root (Chi Shao); persica seed (Tao Ren); safflower (Hong Hua); bur-reed rhizome (San Leng); and zedoary (E Zhu).

In addition to Blood Stasis, there are often other disease-causing factors which are part of the patterns of endometriosis. Cold, Heat, Deficiency, or Excess patterns are frequently part of the mix, and are differentiated based on the clinical manifestations associated with each case of endometriosis. The timing, location, nature, and severity of pain are taken into account, along with associated symptoms. Following are five common patterns of endometriosis, with the differentiating symptoms and the recommended treatment.

1. **Qi Stagnation and Blood Stasis.** The origin of this pattern lies in emotional stress and anxiety. Symptoms of this pattern include: abdominal tenderness; pressure and pain before or during periods; breast distention before periods; distending pain under the rib cage before periods; aversion to pressure on the abdomen; blood clots with periods; pain relieved after the periods; a dark purple tongue with spots and a thin-white tongue coating; and a wiry-choppy pulse. A stagnation/stasis-relieving formula, *Driving Out Blood Stasis below the Diaphragm Decoction* (Ge Xia Zhu Yu Tang), is used for this pattern.
2. **Kidney Deficiency and Blood Stasis.** The origin of this pattern is either a constitutional weakness, or a history of surgical procedures. Symptoms of this pattern include: abdominal tenderness; a feeling of pressure and pain during or after periods; soreness of the back, legs, and hips; dizziness; irregular periods, scanty periods or spotting; blood clots with periods; failure to conceive a baby or habitual miscarriage; a pale tongue color, or a tongue with spots and a thin-white tongue coating; and a deep-thin-choppy pulse. An herbal combination which includes a famous kidney tonic formula, *Restoring the Kidneys Decoction* (Gui Shen Wan), and a renowned Blood stasis-relieving formula, *Four-Substance Decoction with Safflower and Persica Seed* (Tao Hong Si Wu Tang), is most appropriate for this pattern.
3. **Cold Retention and Blood Stasis.** The origin of this pattern is a history of exposure to cold - either cold temperatures, or the habitual consumption of cold foods -- especially during menstruation. Symptoms of this pattern include: abdominal tenderness; pressure and pain before or during periods; a preference for warmth; an aversion to cold; blood clots with periods; pain relieved after the periods; pale complexion; nausea or vomiting with severe menstrual pain; a pale, purplish tongue with spots and a white tongue coating; and a wiry-tight pulse. A formula that reduces stasis, *Driving Out Blood Stasis in the Lower Abdomen Decoction* (Shao Fu Zhu Yu Tang), is used for this pattern.

4. **Qi Deficiency and Blood Stasis.** The origin of this pattern is chronic illness or weakness. Symptoms of this pattern include: abdominal tenderness; pressure and pain during or after periods; a preference for warmth; feeling better with pressure on the abdomen; a "dropping" sensation of the anus; soft bowel movements; pale complexion; lethargy; periods that are either heavy or scanty, with light-colored, watery menses; thick-pale tongue body with tooth-marks on the sides and a white-thin tongue coating; and a thin-soft-weak pulse. A traditional Yang tonic formula, *Tonifying the Yang to Restore Five Decoction* (Bu Yang Huan Wu Tang), is used for this pattern.
5. **Heat Obstruction and Blood Stasis.** The origin of this pattern is a history of genital infections (which in Chinese medicine is considered to be an accumulation of Heat toxins in the body). Symptoms of this pattern include: abdominal tenderness; pressure, pain, and fever before, during, or after periods (the more severe the pain, the higher the fever); a preference for cold temperatures; aversion to pressure on the abdomen; a bitter taste in the mouth; dry throat; anxiety; anger; constipation; painful intercourse; red tongue tip or purple spots on the sides of the tongue, with a thin-yellow tongue coating; and a wiry-rapid pulse. The formula, *StagnationEASE* (Xue Fu Zhu Yu Tang), is used for this pattern.

Treating Endometriosis with Acupuncture and Diet

Scientific studies are suggesting that endometriosis is a neuro-immuno-endocrine related disease. Acupuncture can improve the functioning of the immune system and increase the flow of energy through the meridians, or energy pathways, in the body. Acupuncture can also stimulate the nervous system to release hormones, and is very effective at relieving pain. For these reasons, acupuncture is a viable and effective treatment modality for dealing with endometriosis. The use of specific acupuncture points and herbal formulas for each pattern of endometriosis listed above can produce dramatic improvements.

Diet is also an important factor in controlling endometriosis. A low-fat, high-fiber, dairy-free diet is recommended, along with the addition of certain foods such as Daikon radish (moves Qi) and kelp (dissolves masses and stasis). Avoiding cold foods and drinks is also very helpful.

Chinese Medicine for Endometriosis-Related Infertility

There can be a number of causes for infertility, but endometriosis is the most common cause in the U.S. and China.

In Chinese medicine, diseases and imbalances are diagnosed as patterns. A pattern is defined by the signs and symptoms that a person exhibits, and patients will often present more than one pattern. In the case I discussed last month, the woman had a combined pattern of Congealed Blood (also called Blood Stasis) and Phlegm Accumulation, with the Phlegm Accumulation being the predominant issue. Her Western-medicine diagnosis was endometriosis. This month, I will talk about Jean. Jean also has a Western-medicine diagnosis of endometriosis, but her predominant Chinese medicine pattern is Blood Stasis.

Chinese medicine believes that Blood travels both in the blood vessels and also in the energy meridians of the body. It sounds strange to say that blood can circulate in an energy meridian, but Blood has several aspects in Chinese medicine. There is the physical aspect of blood - the blood that you see when you cut yourself - and this physical aspect only circulates in the blood vessels. There is also the energetic, or functional aspect of blood, which can travel in both blood and energy vessels. The functional aspect of Blood is as a primary Yin substance in the body. Blood is called the 'mother of Chi' because it moistens and nourishes every cell. It also nourishes the feminine principle that exists in every human being. Ideally, Blood circulates freely through the vessels and meridians, but sometimes it becomes stuck in the

meridians of in the tissues, and this is called Congealed Blood or Blood Stasis. A bruise is a superficial type of Blood Stasis involving the physical aspect of blood. When Blood is stuck in the meridians, the main symptom people notice is pain, which is usually described as constant, fixed, stabbing pain. When Blood is stuck in tissues, it often produces lumps, tumors, or masses, which can also be painful. Endometriosis, uterine fibroids, and ovarian cysts are all examples of Blood Stasis in women.

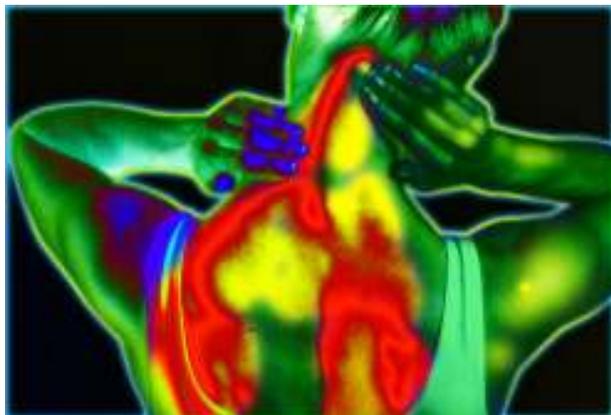
Jean is a thirty-five year old patient who originally came to see me for problems related to a car accident. These injuries cleared up well with acupuncture and Chinese herbal treatment, and Jean began to talk about her infertility issues. She has a successful career and has been happily married for nine years, but she and her husband are both eager to have children, and they have not been able to. Jean felt enough pressure about this situation to visit a fertility clinic. After some diagnostic tests, they told her that she had endometriosis, and that was probably the reason she had not been able to conceive. The doctor at the clinic decided to try fertility drugs with Jean. He believed that the endometriosis was a relatively mild condition, and that fertility drugs could override the endometriosis problem. Unfortunately, the drugs did not work, and at this point, Jean was very hesitant to try this method of fertility treatment again. She didn't like the side effects from the drugs, and it is an expensive treatment with no guarantee of results.

After I began to treat Jean's Blood Stasis issue with acupuncture and Chinese herbs, her symptoms improved relatively fast. The patient that I discussed last month, Tanya, had endometriosis based in a pattern of Phlegm Accumulation, and it took quite a while to resolve because it was a severe case. But Jean's Blood Stasis pattern was not as serious or as deep-seated. Even though both of these cases are called endometriosis in Western medicine, they are seen as two different patterns in Chinese medicine, so the acupuncture points that I used and the herbal formulas that the two women took were quite different. Jean's response to treatment was wonderful - her pelvic discomfort lessened, and she became pregnant. In a few months she will be a first-time mother.

In China, where both Western-style and traditional Chinese medicine are practiced, gynecologists always recommend their infertility patients to try traditional Chinese medicine first. It is far less invasive, and there is much less risk from herbal formulas than from potent drugs.

CHINESE MEDICINE FOR FIBROMYALGIA

Recent studies indicate that approximately 2% of the population in this country suffers from fibromyalgia. The actual figure is probably much higher than that because fibromyalgia is



widely under-diagnosed or misdiagnosed. Even the people who have been given a diagnosis of fibromyalgia have usually spent many frustrating years trying to convince doctors that there was really something wrong with them.

Why is it so hard for conventional Western medicine to diagnose fibromyalgia? For one thing, there are no lab tests or x-rays that can diagnose it. Fibromyalgia is something like Chronic Fatigue Syndrome in that it is not seen as a clear-cut disease caused by a specific agent,

but rather as a collection of symptoms. If a patient exhibits enough of the standard fibromyalgia symptoms, then she is diagnosed with fibromyalgia (women are much more likely to have fibromyalgia than men). Fibromyalgia means "pain of the muscle fiber," and the most characteristic symptom is a high level of pain in muscle tissue. Other common symptoms are exhaustion or overwhelming fatigue, insomnia or sleeping disorder, and very stiff muscles upon awakening in the morning. Besides these principal symptoms, fibromyalgia patients often complain of depression, anxiety, headaches, and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).

Because there is no definitive test for fibromyalgia, and because many of the predominantly female patients complain of depression, it is not unusual for fibromyalgia patients to be treated with anti-depressants. You can imagine how frustrating it is to go to doctor after doctor for years and be told that the problem is all in your head. When fibromyalgia is untreated or ineffectively treated, symptoms can be devastating to the sufferer.

Unfortunately, even when fibromyalgia is diagnosed, Western medicine has no effective treatments to cure the problem. It is recognized that insomnia is the common denominator of fibromyalgia patients, so sleeping medications are almost always prescribed. Exercise is recommended, and pain medications or trigger point injections are often used. Recently, growth hormone injections have been tried on the grounds that insomniacs don't produce as much of this substance as people who sleep normally, but results have been inconclusive.

Before I discuss the traditional Chinese medicine approach to fibromyalgia, let me tell you about Donna. The way her fibromyalgia developed and the way it was treated are very typical. Eight years ago, Donna worked as an office manager and had three young children. Then her husband died, and her children began to have problems adjusting at school. A single working mother with a stressful job, Donna would lie awake nights worrying about her situation. "My sleep went off first □ I never had trouble falling asleep before, but I would lie awake night after night, thinking about my kids and my job, and it seemed that I never had a deep, sound sleep, even if I dozed off. After a while I would wake up in the morning feeling stiff all over and extremely tired. When I went to see my doctor he gave me an anti-depressant, but it didn't work, plus I gained weight." Gradually, Donna's condition worsened. All her muscles were stiff and painful, she had frequent headaches, chronic insomnia, irritability, anxiety, and depression. "I kept going to different doctors, and they would test me for rheumatoid arthritis and do EMGs and all kinds of stuff, but nothing ever showed up. After a few years I realized that I couldn't hold down my job any more. I was really disappointed, after putting in fifteen years with my company, but I hoped that staying home and resting would make me better. But even after six years off work, I still didn't feel better. Then one day I read an article in

the newspaper about fibromyalgia, and I said, "That's me!" So I went to see my doctor with the newspaper in my hand and made him read the article. He agreed that I fit the fibromyalgia profile, and so I finally had a diagnosis after eight years of illness, but none of the treatments we tried over the next two years gave me any real relief. I decided to try Chinese medicine for my condition after reading about it on the Internet."

In traditional Chinese medicine theory, Donna's problem is considered to be an imbalance of the Spleen and Heart. This pattern of Spleen/Heart Deficiency fits the classic symptoms of fibromyalgia. Another pattern that fits the profile of a fibromyalgia patient is called Liver Chi Stagnation with Liver invading the Spleen. Both of these patterns will be discussed in more detail in next month's article. In Donna's case, the emotion of worry or over-concentration had interfered with the Spleen's ability to nourish the Heart and other muscle tissue. Symptoms of muscle pain and insomnia followed as the Spleen and Heart became more deficient and imbalanced over time. The goal of treatment was to nourish the Spleen so it could properly nourish the Heart and other



muscles, and to bring the Spleen and Heart into balance. Acupuncture, Chinese herbal formulas, and dietary recommendations were the modalities used to do this. Calming exercise programs such as Tai Chi or yoga can also promote balance and health. After a series of acupuncture treatments and an herbal formula called Gui Pi Wan, which is specifically designed for Spleen/Heart Deficiency, Donna improved a lot. She said, "This is the best I've felt in eight years. I want to tell everybody how much Chinese medicine can help with fibromyalgia."

For the 2% of the population, mostly female, who suffer from fibromyalgia, it can be a long and difficult process even getting a diagnosis, much less getting adequate treatment for this condition. Western medicine has had a hard time coming to grips with fibromyalgia because there are no tests to determine the presence of the disease, only a collection of symptoms. The two most common symptoms are severe muscle pain and chronic insomnia. The approach of Chinese medicine is to differentiate symptoms into patterns of disease, and then treat the patterns based on centuries of clinical experience.

In the first article, Donna illustrated one of the two most common Chinese medicine patterns associated with fibromyalgia - the pattern of Spleen/Heart Deficiency. Donna would lie awake nights worrying about her job, children, finances, etc. In the morning she would feel fatigued, with stiff, painful muscles. These symptoms intensified over time, until she was forced by pain to quit her job. Chinese medicine sees the Spleen as being the key to Donna's spiral into fibromyalgia. The Spleen is responsible for transforming the food that we eat into the energy (Chi) and blood that sustain our bodies. Obviously, the health of the Spleen can be affected by inappropriate diet, but it is also strongly affected by the emotion of worry, or over-concentration. Chronic worry or too much studying eventually interferes with the Spleen's ability to generate and convey sufficient Chi and blood to the muscles and flesh, which is an area of the body that the Spleen is especially responsible for. The principal muscle that the Spleen needs to sustain is the Heart. The Heart is considered to be the home of the Spirit, and has a close relationship with the Spleen. When the Spleen cannot generate enough substance to nourish the Heart, the Heart Chi does not have enough power to house the spirit properly, and symptoms such as anxiety, palpitations, and insomnia result. A Spleen Deficiency condition can result in fatigue, muscle stiffness, and pain; a Heart Deficiency condition usually brings emotional unrest and insomnia.

These two deficiencies then feed into each other: insomnia causes muscle pain and stiffness, and muscle pain makes sleep more difficult.

The other common fibromyalgia pattern is called Liver Chi Stagnation with Liver invading the Spleen. Another patient of mine will illustrate this pattern. Carol is an elementary school teacher. Six years ago, her twenty-four year marriage ended in a very bitter divorce. Four years ago, she was diagnosed with fibromyalgia. When she came to my clinic she had multiple complaints - fatigue, depression, muscle aches, insomnia, irritable bowel syndrome, and poor memory. An interesting symptom was that she always woke up between 1:00 a.m. and 3:00 a.m., feeling restless and remembering a lot of dreams. She finds her job to be very stressful these days, and often thinks that she can't handle it any more.

When I examined Carol, her tongue looked puffy, with indented tooth marks along the edges, a sign that her Spleen was not functioning well. When I checked her pulses, the Liver pulse felt wiry, and the Spleen pulse was weak. In Chinese medicine terms, her Liver Chi was stuck, or stagnating, and instead of flowing smoothly through its normal channels, it was more or less short-circuiting and attacking Carol's Spleen. As with Spleen Chi deficiency, Liver Chi stagnation can result from an improper diet, but in Carol's case I felt the origin was emotional

- a combination of stress and deep, unexpressed anger.

One of the major responsibilities of the Liver is to ensure the smooth flow of Chi, blood, and emotions. Since anger is the emotion associated with the Liver, extreme or unexpressed anger can really compromise its functioning. Most people are familiar with the way the emotions of anger and fear can interfere with digestion. When we are emotionally upset, we feel that our stomachs or our intestines are "tied up in knots." Chinese medicine says that the Liver is "invading" the Spleen or Stomach. It is interesting that about fifty percent of people with fibromyalgia also have some form of irritable bowel syndrome. This is entirely consistent with the pattern of Liver Chi Stagnation/Liver invades Spleen.

Both Eastern and Western medicine agree that insomnia is a key to fibromyalgia. Western doctors prescribe sleeping pills. Chinese medicine aims to nourish the Heart and the Liver, which are the two most important internal organs in regard to sleep, and to bring them into balance with the Spleen. With Heart blood deficiency, people find it difficult to fall asleep. With Liver Chi stagnation, sleep becomes restless, with intense dreams and a tendency to wake up early in the morning.

In treating this condition, the goals are to regulate and move Liver Chi, harmonize the Liver and the Spleen, and nourish the Spleen so it can do its vital job of processing food into Chi and blood. This is done with acupuncture treatments combined with herbal formulas. Shu Gan Wan is an old formula which breaks up Liver Chi stagnation. Xiao Yao Wan is a formula used when the Spleen is being affected by a dysfunctional Liver. The length of time it takes to see results from treatment depends on how serious the symptoms are, but most people notice improvement after six to eight treatments.

CHINESE MEDICINE – AN APPROACH TO FOOD ALLERGIES

Every time we see a new doctor and fill out a patient history, there is always a question about allergies, especially drug allergies. Since drug allergies can be life threatening, there is a lot of



attention paid to them. Some food allergies can also produce a severe reaction, called anaphylactic shock, or even cause death, but this is a rare occurrence. Food allergies can produce a wide variety of symptoms, some acutely uncomfortable, others subtle and hard to pin down. With seasonal allergies, like hay fever, or a reaction to a specific thing, like bee stings or animal fur, we are usually aware of what the problem is. We say, “Oh, the ragweed must be in bloom,” or “Get that cat away from me.” But with food allergies, people often don’t know what is

causing their discomfort. They go along for years with headaches, fatigue, breathing problems or some other symptom, and are not aware that food allergies could be the source of their problem.

One reason that food allergies can be very hard to diagnose is because the symptoms are not just one thing, like hives or sneezing, but can be a systemic reaction. A person could have gastrointestinal tract symptoms, a respiratory system disorder, or even cardiovascular involvement. Another difficulty with detecting food allergies is that there can be a lag time -- sometimes it takes several days or even several weeks for a reaction to develop.

People with food allergies quite often find that they have developed an allergic reaction to multiple foods. At this point, life becomes difficult. It is very hard to eliminate all the foods they have a bad reaction to: they can’t eat with friends, go out to restaurants, or go to a party. Sometimes they have to bring their own food along to family occasions like Christmas and Thanksgiving dinners. It’s not much fun. And besides that, a very restricted diet can have harmful long-term health consequences. I have seen people suffering from malnutrition because they are frightened of eating, and only eat very limited varieties of foods. They do not get enough nutrients, and develop many other health problems, even becoming disabled. One woman I saw only ate four kinds of food. At 5’6” tall, she weighed 78 pounds, was malnourished, and was pretty much unable to work.

Chinese medicine can be very effective in treating this problem. It focuses on diagnosing and treating the underlying imbalance that produces the symptoms of food allergy. It can reduce the body’s negative reaction to foods, support the functioning of the internal organs, and improve the immune system.

Symptoms:

First, let’s describe the symptoms of food allergy. The most common symptoms are fatigue, hives, eczema, abdominal pain, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, nasal congestion, cough, asthma, and swelling of the lips, eyes, face, tongue, and/or throat. Severe or life-threatening manifestations include difficulty breathing, decreased blood pressure, increased heart rate, dizziness, mental confusion, slurred speech, anxiety attack, and cardiovascular collapse.

Most Common Problem Foods

Shellfish, dairy products, wheat, corn, sugar, certain nuts such as peanuts, strawberries, and food additives such as dyes, preservatives, MSG, sulfites, etc.

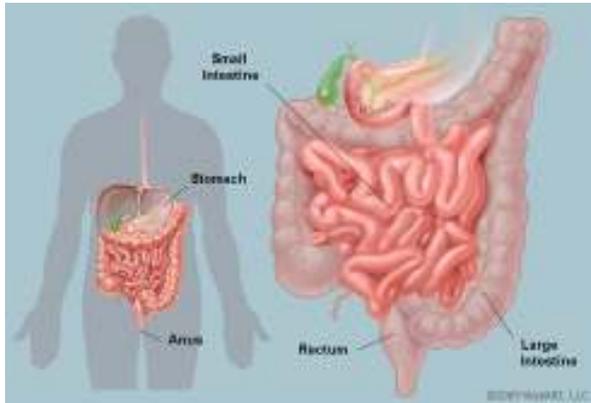
The TCM Approach

Of course, the easy and simple and solution for a food allergy is to avoid the food you're allergic to. But with multiple food allergies, it is almost impossible to eliminate whole categories of foods from the diet. The answer is to rebuild the body's capacity to respond normally to food. Chinese medicine sees the body as interacting organ systems, and also as a system of energy pathways, or meridians, that connect all parts of the body. Deficiencies or disharmonies in the organs or meridians can be the basis of multiple food allergies. The two organ systems most involved with food allergies are the Lung and the Spleen. In addition to breathing, the Lungs are responsible for circulating defensive Chi at the level of the skin. Therefore, any allergic reactions involving the lungs or skin (hives, eczema, nasal congestion, cough, asthma) indicate that the Lung organ system or meridian needs support. The Spleen, with its partner the Stomach, is responsible for digestion, and for transforming food into Chi and blood. The Spleen meridian has an outlet in the face and mouth. Symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, fatigue, and swelling of the lips, tongue, and throat indicate a Spleen imbalance.

A Chinese medicine practitioner will select acupuncture points and herbal formulas that support the functioning of the organs, dispersing unhealthy excess patterns and nourishing deficiencies. If a person has been suffering with food allergies for a long time, it may take several months of treatment to reverse the imbalances, but there is a good chance that a healthy response to food will be restored.

GASTROINTESTINAL DISORDERS IN CHINESE MEDICINE

Traditional Chinese medicine employs several healing techniques to treat patients, including acupuncture, herbal formulas, and moxibustion. Acupuncture and herbs are familiar to most



people in this country, but moxibustion is less well known. Moxibustion is a therapeutic technique of applying an ignited cone or stick of mugwort or other medicinal herbs over the affected part of the body or on the acupuncture points. Moxibustion is often used to warm up cold conditions, or to tonify deficient conditions, but it is also an effective agent against certain types of inflammation, and can be used to treat most gastro-intestinal conditions. Conditions which respond well to moxibustion include gastrointestinal infections such as virus infections from rotavirus; bacterial infections from

salmonella, *shigella* or *escherichia coli*; inflammatory diseases such as chronic gastritis, atrophic gastritis, chronic enteritis, and gastroenteritis; peptic ulcers such as duodenal ulcer and gastric ulcer; circulation problems in the gastrointestinal system such as gastrointestinal tract bleeding and intestinal cramps; gastrointestinal tumors such as stomach cancer, tumors of the small intestine, or colon cancer; inflammatory bowel diseases such as ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease; and other conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome and short bowel syndrome.

In traditional Chinese medical theory, the Spleen is the key organ involved in gastro-intestinal disorders. The Spleen has primary responsibility for "transforming" and "transporting" food essence in the body, including the excretion of waste material. The Spleen and Stomach are Yin/Yang partners, and each one can develop characteristic problems. The Spleen needs to be somewhat moist in order to function well, but if it becomes deficient in Chi, it will become overwhelmed by moisture, and a pathological condition of Dampness (or Damp Heat) can settle into the body. The Stomach, on the other hand, needs to be on the dry side to function well, and when its balance is upset, it can easily overheat, and a painful condition of Stomach Fire can develop. Other organs, especially the Liver, can also contribute to gastro-intestinal distress. The four most common patterns seen when gastro-intestinal problems are differentiated are as follows: Spleen Chi Deficiency, which is caused by chronic fatigue or chronic illness; Damp Heat Retention, which is caused by improper diet, environmental factors, or infections; Disharmony of Liver and Spleen, which is caused by emotional disturbance; and Spleen and Kidney Yang Deficiency, which is caused by chronic illness or aging. To treat these imbalances, Chinese medicine commonly uses acupuncture, herbal medicine, and moxibustion. When applied properly, these modalities balance Yin and Yang, harmonize Chi and Blood, nourish the organs, and eliminate Damp Heat.

Scientific Support

How do we explain these beneficial effects of Chinese medicine modalities in a modern clinical sense? How does it work from the viewpoint of biomedicine? Numerous modern studies, most of them conducted at China's leading research and teaching institutes and in hospital settings, show that acupuncture, moxibustion, and herbal medicine can bring about bio-chemical changes. The following are a few examples:

Excretory Rate of D-Xylose

The excretory rate of D-Xylose is an index of the absorption function of the intestines. Patients with chronic gastritis, chronic enteritis, or peptic ulcer tend to have a lower excretory rate of D-Xylose. A number of clinical studies in China show that acupuncture and moxibustion can increase the D-Xylose excretory rate significantly.

Serum Gastrin

Gastrin is a hormone in the digestive tract, secreted mainly by cells in the stomach in response to eating food. Gastrin causes the stomach to produce more acid and also stimulates contraction of muscles in the wall of the stomach, ileum, and colon. This contraction propels food through the digestive tract. A very recent study at the Affiliated Hospital of Sichuan Academy of Traditional Chinese Medicine found that moxibustion (moxa made with astragalus, codonopsis, etc.) at acupuncture points St 36, Ren 4, and Ren 12 can raise the serum gastrin level.

T-lymphocytes and their Subgroups

T-lymphocytes and their subgroups reflect the status of cells' immune functions. Substantial evidence shows that Spleen Deficient patients have a lower immune function at the cellular level. Clinical studies in China show that acupuncture and moxibustion can increase T-lymphocytes and their subgroups in the blood.

Immuglobulins

Many patients with gastro-intestinal disorders seem to have a lower-than-normal immune response. Immuglobulins are proteins in the blood serum and tissue fluids that are produced by cells of the immune system. They help to destroy antigen-bearing microorganisms in the bloodstream and tissues. Extensive research shows that moxibustion at acupuncture points St 36, Ren 12, and Ren 8 can increase the levels of Immuglobulins Ig A, Ig G, Ig M, and thereby benefit a variety of health conditions such as chronic gastritis, antral gastritis, gastric ulcer, atrophic gastritis, gastroduodenal ulcer, and gastroptosis (stomach has "dropped" from normal position).

Histological Changes

A clinical histological study done at Shanghai Acupuncture and Meridian Institute, in which tissue samples of colon mucus were stained with HE staining, HID-AB and AB-PAS mucin staining and observed under a microscope, showed that moxibustion at acupuncture points St 36, Ren 12, and Ren 6 could effectively treat chronic ulcerative colitis. The results showed that chronic mucositis (inflammation of the mucous layer of the intestinal wall) was decreased, neutrophil infiltration in epithelial cells disappeared, and crypt abscess and/or mucous ulceration were eliminated.

A SAFE AND EFFECTIVE APPROACH TO GENITAL HERPES

One Woman's Story

Ann is a 46 year-old woman with genital herpes who initially came to my clinic last year. She contracted the herpes virus when she was in her early twenties, and has experienced frequent outbreaks over the past 25 years. The outbreaks tend to occur especially when she is under stress, tired, emotionally upset, coming down with a cold, or when she is pre-menstrual. Ann has also noticed that what she eats can make a difference. After a restaurant meal of hot, spicy food, there will be increased discomfort. The constant recurrence of itching and soreness also make it more difficult for her to concentrate at work, leading to more stress and fatigue, leading to more outbreaks. Over the years, Ann has tried every kind of treatment for her condition, including prescription drugs such as Acyclovir, without much success. When she came to my clinic, she was experiencing an acute outbreak. To get this under control, I recommended an herbal decoction (herbs boiled in water). The decoction was used as an external wash to the affected area, and also taken orally. The acute outbreak rapidly cleared up with this treatment. Then it was time to concentrate on treating her internal imbalance to prevent further outbreaks. I recommended that she change her diet, continue to take herbs, and get a course of acupuncture treatments. This reflects the classic Chinese medicine approach: "When it is acute, we treat its symptoms; when it is recurrent and chronic, we treat its root cause." Ann has been pleased with the control that the Chinese medicine approach has given her over her disease. The frequency of recurrence has been significantly reduced, and she feels that her quality of life is much improved.



Genital Herpes in the United States

Genital herpes is an acute inflammatory disease caused by infection with the *herpes simplex* virus. This virus has become extremely common because of its ease of transmission. Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including genital herpes, are on the increase in the United States both among heterosexual people and among homosexual people. An estimated 40 million Americans are thought to have genital herpes, with more than 500,000 new cases expected each year. Some typical signs and symptoms of genital herpes include: small, fluid-filled sacs (vesicles), lesions around the genital area, shallow and painful genital ulcers, redness, marked edema, and tender lymph nodes in the inguinal area. In the United States, approximately one in every five 30-year-old white females has the *herpes simplex* virus, which is a member of the family of viruses responsible for chicken pox, shingles, and infectious mononucleosis.

Genital Herpes in TCM

In traditional Chinese medicine, genital herpes is discussed in the categories of "hot sores" (re chuang) or "genital carbuncle" (yin chuang). Because sexual contact is the primary factor in contracting genital herpes, you are more likely to get herpes if you or your partner have multiple or casual sexual partners. Traditional Chinese medicine does not have a "germ theory" of disease, but perceives pathogens as environmental factors such as cold, heat, dampness, dryness, etc. The internal organs of the body are divided into Yin organs and Yang organs. Each organ system tends to be more or less susceptible to the various pathogenic environmental factors, as well as being susceptible to characteristic emotional disturbances.

In the case of genital herpes, the most common pathogenic factors are dampness and heat, and also the emotion of anger. The key internal organs are the Liver and Gallbladder (Yin/Yang partners), and the Kidneys (with their Yang partner, the Urinary Bladder).

The overall Chinese medicine diagnosis of genital herpes is active toxic damp heat. Within this larger category, three specific patterns are differentiated: damp heat pouring down; toxic heat accumulation; and Liver and Kidney deficiency.

Blistering and erosion of genital tissue, plus burning and itching are the key symptoms of the pattern of damp heat pouring down. Outbreaks are considered to be precipitated by the over-consumption of candy and sugar, which promote the formation of active damp heat. Recurrent outbreaks are due to poor dietary habits, including the eating of hot, spicy foods, heavy, greasy foods, and alcohol. The leading Chinese herbal formula to treat this pattern is *Damp Heat Clearing* (Long Dan Xie Gan Wan).

Erosion of genital blisters and fever are the key symptoms for the pattern of toxic heat accumulation, in which the outbreaks are triggered by unexpressed anger and emotional upset, as well as the over-consumption of hot, spicy foods. A time-tested Chinese herbal formula for this pattern is *Toxin Clearing* (Wu Wei Xiao Du Yin). This is a powerful formula for the acute stage of genital herpes.

The Liver and Kidney deficiency pattern has less fluid-filled blisters, but is characterized by frequent outbreaks, back pain, and joint soreness. The recurrent outbreaks are caused by constitutional weakness, stress, fatigue, episodes of cold or flu, menstruation changes, and seasonal changes. A renowned formula for this pattern is *Water Fire Balance* (Zhi Bai Di Huang Wan). This is also an excellent preventive formula for recurrent outbreaks of genital herpes.

Leading Herbs for Genital Herpes

This section contains a list of Chinese herbs which are of proven effectiveness in dealing with damp heat conditions such as genital herpes, urinary bladder infections, skin conditions, etc. Several of these herbs have scientifically documented anti-microbial effects. When used externally, the herbs are boiled, and the liquid is then strained off and used as a wash to the affected area. When taken internally, the herbs are usually used in a formula with other herbs and can be taken as capsules or as raw herbs that are boiled in water. It is best to consult with a Chinese medicine practitioner or a herbologist before using herbs to treat any condition.

- **Wood Root** (Ban Lan Gen) As a top antiviral herb, wood root has a very broad spectrum of antimicrobial activity. Studies have shown that wood root has an inhibitory effect against *Shigella dysenteriae*, *Shigella flexneri*, *Salmonella typhi*, and *Salmonella enteritidis*, and hemolytic *Streptococcus*.
- **Philodendron** (Huang Bai) As one of the most widely used herbs in Chinese medicine, phellodendron has been proven to have properties of inhibiting and containing bacterial, viral and yeast infections. It is a powerful herb for stopping genital itching.
- **Dittany Bark** (Bai Xian Pi) As one of the most popular herbs for external use, dittany bark works wonderfully for many skin problems ranging from itching and eczema to inflammation.
- **Sophora** (Ku Shen) Renowned for "clearing up heat, drying up dampness, reliving itch and destroying worms" in classical Chinese herbal medicine texts, sophora is extensively used for external applications. This bitter-flavored and cold-property herb is widely used to treat furuncles, carbuncles and genital itch in women.

- **Wild Chrysanthemum Flower** (Ye Ju Hua) This autumn blooming flower has a property of clearing heat and relieving toxicity. It has shown an inhibitory effect in vitro against *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Shigella* spp., and some ECHO viruses.
- **Smilax** (Tu Fu Ling) As a leading herb of relieving toxicity and eliminating dampness in Chinese medicine, it is widely used for recurrent ulcers and skin lesions due to damp-heat.

AVERTING HEADACHES WITH ACUPUNCTURE AND CHINESE HERBS

Is acupuncture an effective treatment for migraines and other types of headache? "Yes, indeed," is the confident answer of acupuncture practitioners around the world. Every day, headache sufferers come to acupuncture clinics in the United States and China and find relief for their symptoms. For people who have been plagued by headaches for years, this relief comes as a gift from one of the most ancient healing traditions in the world. Chinese herbal medicine is another valid modality for treating and averting headaches. The use of traditional Chinese herbs to treat headaches is just beginning to be appreciated by American patients.



Roger G. is a 37 year-old gentleman who came to my clinic a year ago for severe migraine headaches. He had suffered from migraines since he was thirteen, and for the last seven years his headaches had been a daily occurrence, leaving him in constant pain and destroying any chance of leading a normal life. His wife came with him that first day, and said to me, "You have to help him - our whole family has been affected by Roger's headaches." Roger gave me a list of all the medications he had ever taken: various prophylactic agents including beta-blockers, tricyclic agents, and muscle relaxants. In the past few years, he had been using more and more analgesic medication to allow him to function well enough to hold down a job. He was taking Excedrin, aspirin, and generic Sudafed three times every day. When he had especially severe headaches, he received Wigraine and Imitrex injections every week.

I started acupuncture treatments on Roger three times per week. After a little more than two weeks, his headaches were significantly reduced. Instead of experiencing daily headaches, he was headache-free three to four days a week. I reduced the treatment to twice per week, then once per week. After three months, Roger was totally headache free. Now I see him about once a month for a "tune-up," and he remains free of pain.

Every year about seventy million Americans suffer from recurring headaches. Twenty- six million of them are identified as migraine sufferers. The goal of both conventional Western medicine and traditional Chinese medicine in the case of headaches is to relieve pain and enable people to function well in their lives. But while the ultimate goal is the same, the diagnostic paradigm and treatment modalities of these two types of medicine are fundamentally different. In the remainder of this article, we contrast the Western approach to headaches with the Chinese medicine approach, and also list some Chinese herbal remedies for specific headache patterns.

Conventional Western Medicine for Headaches

Modern scientific research has established the following mechanisms for headaches. Headache pain begins with the trigeminal nerve, which is located in the brain stem and carries sensory impulses to and from the face. When the trigeminal nerve is stimulated by a headache trigger such as anxiety, glare, noise, anger, improper diet, medications, or hormones, a burst of neurotransmitters is released. One of these neurotransmitters, serotonin, has the function of screening out "unimportant" signals to the brain, and admitting signals that demand attention. Serotonin fluctuation is the biochemical and neurological foundation of understanding headaches. Low serotonin levels make people more vulnerable to headaches.

The International Headache Society differentiates the following types of headaches based on the number of attacks per month, length of time per attack, characteristics of the pain, and other accompanying symptoms.

- **Migraine Headache.** Unilateral quality is the characteristic that distinguishes migraine from other types of headache. Typical symptoms of migraines include: intense head pain; nausea or vomiting; seeing an aura (halo of light) around objects; sparkling, rainbow-like colors and black spots in field of vision; extreme sensitivity to light; fever; chills; aching; and sweating. Each migraine attack could last for several days.
- **Tension Headache.** A typical attack is characterized by a mild to moderate squeezing or pressing pain which is steady and non-throbbing on both sides of the head, back of the neck, and the facial area. It can last from an hour to several hours. It may occur one or more times in a week.
- **Cluster Headache.** This headache is excruciatingly painful. The penetrating and non-throbbing pain is felt behind the eyes or in the temples. The incidence of cluster headaches continues for two to three months at a time. Each attack can last from 45 minutes to two hours. Attacks tend to occur at night, especially in the spring or autumn season.
- **Post-Traumatic Headache.** This results from head or neck injury. The pain can be experienced as dull, aching, stabbing, sharp, or excruciating at the site of the injury. Each attack can last from twenty minutes to all day. Attacks occur in clusters or can be continuous. Sometimes the headache strikes within 24 to 48 hours of the initial trauma, while in other cases it takes months, or even years, for it to appear.
- **Disease-Related Headache.** Many disease conditions produce headaches as part of their pathology. These include: brain tumor; allergies; temporomandibular joint pain (TMJ); nerve pain; disorders of the head, neck, ear, nose, throat and mouth; stroke; high blood pressure; constipation; and sleeping disorders.

Americans consume 80 billion tablets of aspirin a year, and headaches are cited as the number-one reason for aspirin use. In addition to the over-the-counter drugs that are readily available to the public, physicians prescribe a variety of drugs to keep the "pain messengers" from reporting to the brain, or to abort an attack in progress, or to prevent an attack from occurring. Available pain killers range from analgesics, narcotics, antidepressants, ergotamine derivatives, and anti-migraine drugs to beta-blockers and calcium channel blockers. Unfortunately, many of these drugs have unwanted side effects. What people really want is relief from their headache pain, without harmful side effects.

Acupuncture for Headaches

Acupuncture is not only effective for migraine headaches, but also works very well with tension headaches, cluster headaches, post-traumatic headaches, and disease-related headaches that might be due to sinus problems, TMJ, stroke, high blood pressure, or sleeping disorders. The greatest advantage of acupuncture over Western medicine is that it does no harm. Unlike synthetic drugs and surgery, acupuncture has virtually no side effects. Acupuncture, as an effective treatment modality, was applied to headaches from the earliest beginnings of traditional Chinese medicine. Traditional Chinese medicine has a very coherent, consistent and philosophically-based framework for headache etiology, physiology, diagnosis, and treatment strategy.

It is not possible, in an article of this length, to explain the theory of traditional Chinese medicine in detail. The key concepts of Yin and Yang, and vital energy (Chi) are important, as well as an understanding of the meridian system. Yang energy tends to go upwards and outwards. All the body's Yang meridians meet in the head, and they facilitate the flow of Blood and Chi into the head. A clear mind and pain-free head depend on having a sufficiency of Chi and Blood flow, well-functioning internal organs, and a correct rising and falling of Yin and Yang energy. There are a number of conditions, patterns, or dysfunctions that can cause headaches. The most common are: a deficiency of Chi, which prevents Chi and Yang from circulating properly; a deficiency of Blood, so that the meridians aren't properly nourished, and insufficient Blood is circulating to the head; a blockage of the meridians by external pathogenic factors. Acupuncture treatment can harmonize the organs, balance Yin and Yang, tonify Chi and Blood, and clear blocked meridians.

Now that acupuncture has come into wider use in the United States, both patients and professionals are asking questions about how acupuncture works in a modern, scientific sense. What are the mechanisms? Is there any scientific evidence that supports the effectiveness of acupuncture? There have been a number of scientific studies and clinical trials since the 1970s, and these have tended to substantiate the ancient theories of traditional Chinese medicine. Researchers and scientists now believe that acupuncture can bring about many biochemical changes in the body:

- **Serotonin Changes:** Acupuncture treatments affect several of the body's neurotransmitters, bringing about changes in the blood serum levels of these neurotransmitters. Scientists have found that low serotonin levels make people more vulnerable to headaches. The ability of acupuncture to regulate serotonin levels was extensively studied by experts in China, Japan, and Canada. Changes in serotonin levels in both the brain and the spinal cord can be achieved with acupuncture.
- **Endorphin Changes:** Dr. Jisheng Han, a world-renowned professor in acupuncture research, discovered endorphin-type neuropeptides in the 1970s, when China launched the acupuncture research program for Acupuncture-induced Analgesia (AA). He showed that electrical stimulation of acupuncture needles released different levels of endorphin compounds in the central nervous system. Endorphins are natural pain killers in the body. It is this mechanism that is most widely cited to explain the effectiveness of acupuncture treatments in relieving pain, including headache pain.
- **Acetylcholinesterase Changes:** A study showed that acupuncture can reduce pain by regulating blood acetylcholinesterase (Ach) activity, which indicates that pain relief from acupuncture treatments is related to peripheral cholinergic neurotransmitters.
- **Serum Magnesium Changes:** Acupuncture treatments affect the levels of trace elements in blood serum. Scientists found that a low level of magnesium in serum is correlated to migraines. A very recent clinical study conducted in the Department of Acupuncture and Orthopedics at Hubei Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine indicates that acupuncture treatments can increase the blood magnesium level.

- **Endogenous Opioid System:** Morphine and morphine-like substances (opioids) have been used for the relief of pain since antiquity. It was found recently that cells in certain regions of the brain bind opiates stereospecifically, and that the analgesic potency (pain-relieving capacity) of a drug correlated directly to its binding affinity for these receptors. This led to a search for naturally-occurring endogenous opioid peptides (pain-killing substances that the body naturally produces). Eukephalines, B-endorphin, dynorphin, orphanin FQ, and endomorphin were discovered between 1975 and 1997. Electroacupuncture, using different frequencies, can accelerate the release of endogenous opioids in the central nervous system.

In addition to the scientific biochemical studies cited above, several clinical trials of acupuncture therapy support the effectiveness of acupuncture treatments in the relief of migraine headaches. A randomized clinical study with thirty participants was conducted in the Department of Neurology, University College Hospital, London, England. The study results showed that there was a significant reduction in pain intensity and medication intake for patients who received acupuncture treatments. In another study investigating the long-term outcome of using acupuncture to treat migraine, led by Dr. Baischer of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Vienna, the results showed that the improvements which are achieved with acupuncture therapy are stable over a long period of time. The frequency of migraine attacks was significantly reduced during a five-week observation period immediately after treatment, and also during a three-year follow-up period.

When physicians in this country refer their patients to an acupuncturist, the most common reason is for headache treatment. Headache is also included in the list of forty-three conditions recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) for which acupuncture is effective. Safe and effective treatment of pain was the most important evidence that persuaded the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to upgrade acupuncture needles from "experimental use only" to "approved for use by professionals." The National Institutes of Health (NIH) endorses acupuncture treatments for headaches.

Chinese Herbal Medicine for Headaches

Although headaches may be caused by different triggers, occur in different locations and at different times, Chinese medicine practitioners differentiate groups of symptoms into a specific pattern, and then treat that pattern as it manifests in each individual patient. Each pattern is described in terms of the type of pain experienced, general body conditions, appearance of the patient's tongue, and palpation of the patient's pulse. A headache pattern may be caused by external effects, such as chemicals, weather, and other environmental factors; or by internal imbalances, such as a Blood Deficiency or Kidney Deficiency. The following section lists the most commonly-encountered headache patterns, with characteristic symptoms, and also gives the Chinese herbs that are used to treat each pattern.

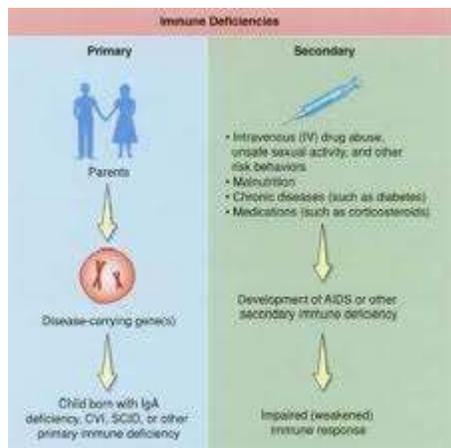
- **Wind Cold Pattern.** Symptoms include: sporadic pain, stiff, aching shoulders; an aversion to cold temperatures; aggravation of the condition by wind; absence of thirst; a thin-white tongue coating; and a floating-tight pulse. Leading herbs for this pattern include *ligustici wallichii* (chuan xiong), *schizonepetae* (jing jie), and *ledebouriellae* (fang feng).
- **Wind Heat Pattern.** Symptoms include: a painfully-swollen sensation in the head; severe, "splitting" pain; fever, or an aversion to warm temperatures; red face; red eyes; thirst; constipation; dark-colored urine; a red tongue body with a yellow tongue coating; and a floating-rapid pulse. Top herbs for this pattern include *ligustici wallichii* (chuan xiong), *actractylodis* (bai zhi), and *chrysanthemum* (ju hua).

- **Wind Dampness Pattern.** Symptoms include: heavy-feeling pain; a "muzzy," or confused feeling; a feeling of heaviness in the whole body; chest congestion; aggravation of symptoms by damp weather; difficult urination; loose bowels; a sticky-white tongue coating; and a soggy pulse. Useful herbs for this condition are notoptergii (qiang huo), duhuo radix (du huo), and ligustici wallichii (chuan xiong).
- **Liver Yang Pattern.** Emotional disturbance (especially feelings of anger) is the primary origin of this pattern. Symptoms of the pattern include: pain with dizziness; anxiety; anger; insomnia; hypochondriac (under the ribcage) pain; red face; a bitter taste in the mouth; a thin-yellow tongue coating; and a wiry-strong pulse. Top herbs for this pattern include gastrodiae elatae (tian ma), and uncariae (gou teng).
- **Kidney Deficiency Pattern.** General weakness is the basic cause of this pattern. Symptoms include: low-level pain with a feeling of "emptiness"; dizziness; sore back; fatigue; spontaneous seminal emissions (in men), or abnormal vaginal discharge (for women); ringing in the ears; sleeplessness; red tongue; and a thin-weak pulse. The leading herbs include rehmannia (shu di huang), corni officinalis (shan zhu yu), dioscoreae (shan yao), and lycii chinensis (gou qi zi).
- **Blood Deficiency Pattern.** Chronic illness or loss of blood is the cause of this pattern. Symptoms include: pain with dizziness; heart palpitations; fatigue; pale complexion; a pale tongue body with a thin-white tongue coating; and a thin-weak pulse. Leading herbs include angelica sinensis (dang gui), paeoniae lactiflorae (bai shao), rhemannia (sheng di huang), and ligustici wallichii (chuan xiong).
- **Blood Stagnation Pattern.** Symptoms include: chronic pain; pain in a fixed location; sharp pain, such as pain from a head injury; a purple tongue body with a thin-white tongue coating; and a thin or thin-choppy pulse. Top herbs for this pattern include persicae (tao ren), carthami tinctorii (hong hua), and paeoniae rubra (chi shao).
- **Phlegm Retention Pattern.** Chronic over-weight or the habitual consumption of sweet and fatty foods are the main cause of this pattern. Symptoms include: dull head pain with a feeling of heaviness and/or muzziness; a sensation of fullness and oppression of the chest; a feeling of nausea and phlegm retention in the throat; a white-sticky tongue coating; and a slippery or wiry-slippery pulse. Herbs for this pattern include pinelliae (ban xia), citri reticulatae (chen pi), and atractylodis (bai zhu).

When a headache sufferer considers the treatment options available, he or she should remember that acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine provide a safe, drug-free treatment that is stable over time and has no adverse side effects.

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE FOR IMMUNE DEFICIENCY

Nothing is more important to your health than a well-functioning immune system. Such ailments and diseases as the common cold, infections, asthma, food allergies, rheumatoid arthritis, and even cancer are all related to immune system dysfunction. Immuno-deficiency is a condition in which the immune system is suppressed by certain factors, making you vulnerable to disease and infection. It is one of many disorders related to the immune system.



It is clear from Chinese medicine textbooks that Chinese medicine practitioners have been dealing with immune system disorders for thousands of years. The symptoms that are described are those of immune deficiency, allergic reactions, and auto-immune disease. Effective treatments included natural herbs, dietary therapy, acupuncture, and Tai Chi. These treatments are especially effective because they

focus on strengthening the immune system and stimulating the body's natural defense mechanisms. In this article I will deal primarily with how Chinese medicine treats immune deficiency.

You can often hear someone complaining in the following fashion: "My daughter gets one cold after another." "I just can't get rid of this cold - I've had it for six months." "I got pneumonia twice last winter." These are typical examples of immune deficiency problems.

One day, a patient came to my clinic looking for help. She had had pneumonia three times in the past six months, and had been taking antibiotics for quite a while, switching from one to another. Sometimes her health was better for a few weeks, but then the infection came back. She was very tired and stressed by her situation, and had no other solution than to continue taking the antibiotics. After she began receiving regular acupuncture treatments, combined with Chinese herbal therapy and diet modifications to support her immune system, her health improved dramatically.

As noted above, preventing disease and maintaining wellness are deeply rooted in the philosophy of traditional Chinese medicine. The idea of taking care of one's body, and of forestalling illness before it manifests has become part of Chinese culture. There, you will see people drinking ginseng herbal tea with their breakfast, having astragalus chicken soup in a restaurant for lunch, and cooking a shiitake mushroom stir-fry for their dinner. It is not unusual for Chinese people to get regular acupuncture treatments for the purpose of enhancing their immune systems.

Diet and Nutrition

Shiitake mushroom is one of the leading foods recommended by Chinese medicine practitioners for enhancing immunity. It contains lentinan, an anti-viral substance which has a strong immuno-stimulating activity. These brown, beefy-tasting mushrooms are used as a substitute for meat in the Chinese diet. A mushroom and vegetable stir-fry makes the most delicious vegetarian dish. Besides shiitake mushrooms, other foods that are wonderful for our immune systems are garlic, sesame seeds, yogurt, and certain fruits and vegetables. The micro-nutrients beta carotene, zinc, and vitamins A, E, and C are also key elements in strengthening our immune system. A diet rich in these foods and nutrients and low in fat is very beneficial.

Chinese Herbs and Herbal Formulas

Many Chinese herbs have strong immunity-enhancing effects. Astragalus is very well-known for its powerful "non-specific" immune system stimulating capacity, which works by increasing the numbers and activity of roving white blood cells. A study conducted at the University of Texas Medical Center in Houston showed that astragalus extracts were able to completely restore the function of immune cells in cancer patients. The immune system can certainly be tonified, or even completely restored, by using this herb. This sweet-tasting root is often sliced and simmered in chicken broth, or cooked with vegetable soup. As effective as astragalus is by itself, Chinese herbal formulas actually achieve a much stronger effect than single herbs. An herbal formula is not only more powerful than a single herb, but can cover a wider range of symptoms. *Chi Spleen Tonic* (Bu Zhong Yi Qi Tang) is a formula that has been used in Chinese medicine for hundreds of years. Astragalus is the chief herb in this formula.

Chi Spleen Tonic (Bu Zhong Yi Qi Tang)

Astragalus (Huang Qi)
Licorice (Gan Cao)
Agelica (Dang Gui)
Ginseng (Ren Shen)
Tangerine Peel (Chen Pi)
Cimicifuga (Sheng Ma)
Buplerum (Chai Hu)
Atractylodes (Bai Zhu)

Ginseng is the most popular Chinese herb on the market today. It is widely used as an immune system enhancer, and also as a general tonic. Most people do not know, however, that there are several types of ginseng available, including Chinese ginseng, Korean ginseng, American ginseng, and Siberian ginseng. Each of these varieties has a different property, and it is wise to consult with a Chinese medicine practitioner to determine which type is best for you. Literally hundreds of studies have been done on ginseng, and it has been found to have the following properties: it protects the liver; stimulates the immune system; prevents radiation damage to nerve tissue; has antioxidant effects; and prevents cancer. There are a number of ginseng products on the market these days, but the best results can be obtained with a traditional formula, *Immunenergy* (Shi Quan Da Bu Tang), which has been used for a thousand years to treat immune deficiency and fatigue. Ginseng is the chief herb in this formula. Testing in many countries has proven the efficacy of Shi Quan Da Bu Tang. It is also popular with post-cancer patients who are undergoing chemotherapy or radiation therapy.

Immunenergy Formula (Shi Quan Da Bu Tang)

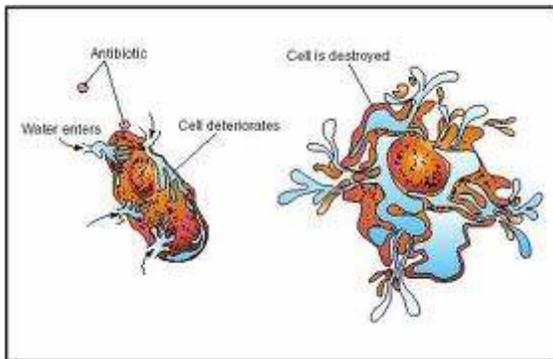
Angelica (Dang Gui)
Cnidium (Chuan Qiong)
Peony (Bai Shao)
Rehmannia (Shu Di Huang)
Ginseng (Ren Shen)
Atractylodes (Bai Zhu)
Poria (Fu Ling)
Licorice (Gan Cao)
Astragalus (Huang Qi)
Cinnamon (Rou Gui)

Acupuncture

Acupuncture is another powerful tool to regulate the immune system. In China, people know how energetic they feel after having an acupuncture treatment, and they will use acupuncture as part of a plan for maintaining perfect health. In the United States, acupuncture was initially accepted as a valid treatment for pain-related issues, but it has the potential to treat a wide range of health problems, including immune deficiency. Research shows that acupuncture treatments can increase the body's T-cell count, as well as the number of cells that ingest and destroy bacteria, protozoa, and cell debris. A study shows that white blood cell counts and mobility have increased by 168 percent within three hours after treatment. Many people are beginning to realize that regular acupuncture treatments for their asthma, allergies, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, colds, or infections will relieve their symptoms. Actually, acupuncture can do much more than that: it can regulate immune function and treat the fundamental cause of disease.

TREATING INFECTIONS: ANTIBIOTICS OR CHINESE HERBS?

As a pillar of modern medicine, antibiotics play a tremendous role in dealing with infections. When the body's immune system is overwhelmed, antibiotics can be very useful. However,



although more than a hundred different antibiotics have been developed since the discovery of penicillin in 1928, infections still plague us. Many bacteria develop resistance to the antibiotics that once killed them. While antibiotics can be lifesaving when used appropriately, overuse and inappropriate use of antibiotics can cause widespread health problems.

Wide overuse of antibiotics in the United States is recognized by both health professionals and the public as a cause for concern. This problem is much

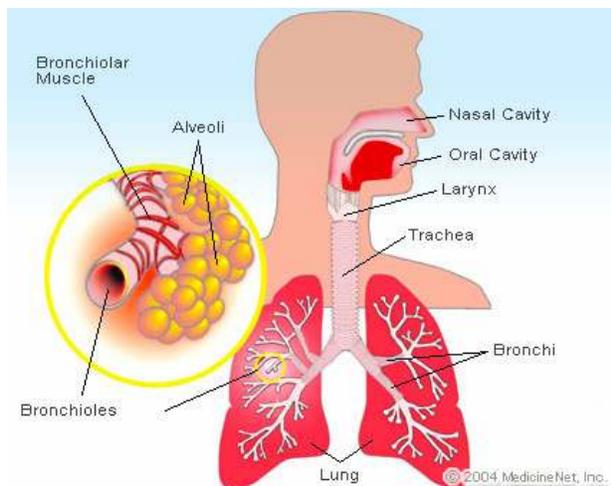
less prevalent in Asian countries. Do the Chinese and Asians have fewer bacterial infection problems? Why don't they have an antibiotic-abuse problem? As more people consider this question in comparative medicine, they find the answer in a natural and powerful substitute for antibiotics -- Chinese herbs.

Modern chemical antibiotics have been in existence less than a hundred years, whereas the natural herbal antibiotics prescribed by traditional Chinese healers have been used for more than 2000 years by millions of people. Classical Chinese medical textbooks such as *Theory of Febrile Diseases* and *Synopsis of the Golden Cabinet*, by Zhang Zhongjing, (150-219 AD), and *Treatise on Differentiation and Treatment of Seasonal Febrile Diseases*, by Wu Jutong, 1798, include effective formulas for "Clearing Heat," "Expelling Cold," and "Relieving Toxicity" which are used to treat infectious diseases. Although traditional Chinese medicine and conventional Western medicine are based on different philosophies, they share the same goal of curing their patients. Traditional Chinese medicine may be especially advantageous with modern complicated conditions where "bugs," "super-bugs," and "super-super-bugs" come in so many different forms that a single antibiotic fails to deal with them. The proper use of Chinese herbal formulas can not only inhibit bacterial, viral and fungal infections, but also minimize the need for antibiotics with their adverse side effects. This article is written for those who seek a natural, safe and effective alternative to antibiotics.

Conventionally, two theories dominate the practice of medicine on infectious diseases. One theory is that germs cause infectious diseases. The other theory is that diminished host resistance causes infectious diseases. The "great compromise" of these two theories is widely accepted by both the public and professionals. That is, infectious organisms are present in the host or the environment, but infection does not occur unless the host's resistance diminishes. The implication of this compromise is that a strong immune system is fundamental if the body is to resist infections. A medicine which controls bacterial infection and sustains the immune system is always preferable to a medicine which kills bacteria but depresses the immune system. This article discusses a wide range of Chinese herbal formulas called formulas for "Clearing Heat," formulas for "Expelling Cold," and formulas for "Relieving Toxicity". These formulas can replace antibiotics in many cases, and they also benefit the immune system. This article does not intend to diminish the role of antibiotics in any sense. But, when antibiotics do not work and their prolonged use causes side effects, Chinese herbal medicine can be a very useful option.

Upper Respiratory Infections

Angela, a school teacher, came to my clinic two winters ago with pneumonia. It was her third case of pneumonia that winter. Her doctor had tried five different kinds of antibiotics on her.



She told me she could not afford to be sick any more and was really frustrated with her condition because she could not see the end. Quite soon after she began Chinese herbs and acupuncture treatments, her cough was gone. Then we began to build up her immunity with Chinese herbs, acupuncture, and dietary modifications. Now she is in very good health. Last winter she got a mild cold with no cough, and got rid of it in a few days.

The most common type of infections are respiratory infections. Almost everyone has experienced a running nose, sneezing, sore throat, cough, sinus infection, etc. In China, Chinese herbal remedies are the first option for

dealing with this type of problem.

Practitioners choose formulas for their patients based on the symptoms and the severity of the problem. Symptoms are differentiated into patterns by traditional Chinese medicine diagnosis, and the appropriate formula for that pattern is chosen. Among dozens of formulas, *Cold & Flu Formula* (Yin Qiao San) is the most popular. This hundred-year-old remedy is famous for both prevention and treatment of common cold, and is stocked in many families' medicine cabinets, even in the United States. Honeysuckle and forsythia, which are the leading herbs in *Cold and Flu Formula*, have a strong inhibitory effect against many pathogenic bacteria such as *streptococcus* and *staphylococcus*. Clinical studies have also proven the effectiveness of many other standard herbal formulas (see box) in dealing with upper respiratory infections.

Cold and Flu Formula (Yin Qiao San)

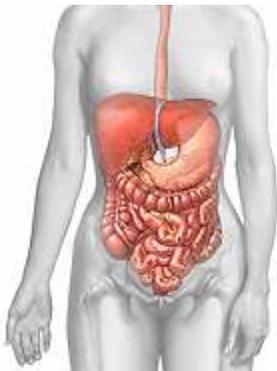
Forsythia (Lian Qiao)
Honeysuckle (Jin Yin Hua)
Platycodon (Jie Geng)
Mint (Bo He)
Bamboo Leaf (Dan Zhu Ye)
Licorice (Gan Cao)
Schizonepeta (Jing Jie)
Soy Bean (Dan Dou Gu)
Arctium (Niu Bang Zi)

Commonly Used Herbal Formulas for Upper Respiratory Infections

<i>Cold & Flu Formula</i> (Yin Qiao San)
<i>SinusEASE</i> (Xin Yi Wan)
<i>Notopterygii Nine Formula</i> (Jiu Wei Qiang Huo Tang)
<i>Wind-Heat Clearing</i> (Sang Ju Yin)
<i>Ephedra Decoction</i> (Ma Huang Tang)
<i>Cinnamon Decoction</i> (Gui Zhi Tang)
<i>Lung Cleansing</i> (Xie Fei San)
<i>Lung Heat Clearing</i> (Ma Xing Shi Gan Tang)

Gastrointestinal Infections

One of my patients told me about the diarrhea, stomach pain, and vomiting she experienced when she traveled to Mexico last year, and that she took a lot of antibiotics to deal with these



symptoms. She is going to the Caribbean soon, and is looking for some herbs that can prevent her from suffering the effects of contaminated food and water. Gastroenteritis and dysentery are common not just in developing countries; we see many cases each year in the United States. Antibiotics can be very effective if the diarrhea is caused by certain bacteria, but bacteria are not the only cause of diarrhea. Gastroenteritis symptoms can also be caused by parasites, amoebas, toxins, certain medications, and even food allergies, so antibiotics are not always effective. When people are looking for a preventive treatment, I always recommend herbs. One of the most important herbs for dealing with these problems is coptis (huang lian). Many studies have shown that coptis strongly inhibits many bacteria such as shigella, salmonella, and other bacteria that cause dysentery. Salmonella is the most common bacterium in the United States that can cause gastroenteritis and typhoid fever. Every year, more than two million new cases of salmonella infection are reported. Every traveler in China puts coptis or a coptis formula in his suitcase when he takes a trip.

Chinese Herbal Formulas for gastrointestinal Infections

<i>Coptis Decoction</i> (Huang Lian Jie Du Tang)
<i>Damp Heat Clearing</i> (Long Dan Xie Gan Tang)
<i>Patchouli Combination</i> (Huo Xiang Zheng Qi San)
<i>Intestine Clearing</i> (Qing Chang Yin)
<i>Pueraria Combination</i> (Ge Gen Qin Lian Tang)
<i>Peony Decoction</i> (Shao Yao Tang)
<i>Pulsatilla Decoction</i> (Bai Tou Weng Tang)

A group of formulas including *Coptis Decoction* (Huang Lian Jie Du Tang), *Peony Decoction* (Shao Yao Tang) and *Pulsatilla Decoction* (Bai Tou Weng Tang), which have coptis as one of the main ingredients, have been widely used in dealing with gastrointestinal infections. Coptis is traditionally used for clearing Damp Heat in the stomach or intestines. Besides its inhibitory effect on bacteria such as shigella and salmonella, coptis has also been scientifically proven to have a strong inhibitory effect on streptococcal infections and staphylococcal infections. Studies also show that coptis is effective against some bacteria that have developed resistance to the antibiotics streptomycin, chloramphenicol, and oxytetracycline hydrochloride. Coptis is also the leading natural herb for combating serious viral and fungal infections in traditional Chinese medicine.

Urinary Tract Infections

Urinary tract infections including bladder infections, urethral infections, and kidney infections account for ten million visits to the doctor annually, and are second only to respiratory infections in frequency. Women are more prone to urinary tract infections than men. They are among the most common health problems for women, increasing in frequency as a woman goes through menopause. Statistically, twenty percent of women who have had a urinary tract infection will develop a second infection. A variety of standard antibiotics such as Trimplex, Bactrim, Amoxil, and Macrodatin are the medications most often prescribed for urinary tract infections by conventional medicine practitioners. For someone with chronic or recurrent infections, however, the constant use



of antibiotics can eventually diminish the body's natural capacity to fight off infection. In this case, natural herbal remedies can be a safe and effective alternative to the use and overuse of antibiotics.

Recently, I saw a woman with a chronic bladder infection who was referred to me by her physician. This woman had a five-year history of frequent bladder infections. Sometimes she experienced a new infection every few weeks. She had tried many different antibiotics, which were effective in the short term, but the infection would always return. At this point, I felt that Chinese herbs would be a better option for her. A balanced herbal formula will not only combat the current infection, but will also benefit the immune system, improving the body's chances of warding off the next infection.

Another important reason for using Chinese herbs is that many of them can be very effective in dealing with the "super-bugs" which have developed a resistance to existing antibiotics.

There are many time-tested Chinese herbal formulas (see box) available for dealing with urinary tract infections. A formula will be prescribed depending on the pattern of the symptoms presented by the patient. For example, *UrinClearing* (Zhi Bai Di Huang Wan) is used to treat bladder infections with the Deficiency pattern called "stranguria complicated with hematuria." The clinical manifestations of this pattern include chronic illness, pink blood in the urine, painful urination, low back soreness, and fatigue.

Let me mention again that I do not encourage people to self-prescribe. A standard formula such as the *Cold & Flu Formula* may be taken as indicated, but for more serious or chronic health problems, it is best to consult a Chinese medicine practitioner in order to get the proper formula for your condition.

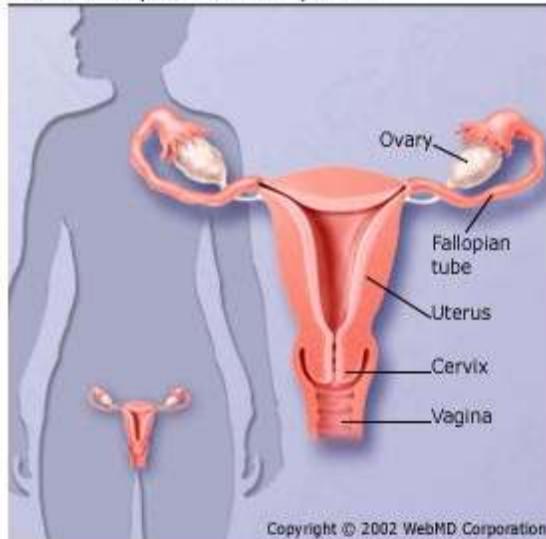
Herbal Formulas for Urinary Tract Infections

<i>UT Clearing</i> (Ba Zheng San)
<i>Aquilaria Powder</i> (Chen Xiang San)
<i>Cephalanoplos Decoction</i> (Xiao Ji Yin Zi)
<i>Aristolochia Powder</i> (Dao Chi San)
<i>UrinClearing</i> (Zhi Bai Di Huang Wan)
<i>Dioscorea Formula</i> (Cheng Shi Bi Xie Fen Qing Yin)

INFECTIONS OF THE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM IN CHINESE MEDICINE

Infections of reproductive system are one of the women's most common complaints. Modern medicine differentiates infections of women's reproductive system according to the location and nature of the infections, such as vulvitis, vaginitis, cervicitis, pelvic inflammatory disease. They share similar clinical symptoms such as itching in the genital area, abnormal vaginal discharge, or ruptured abscess. Modern medicine helped women with powerful antibiotics. But these "magic drugs" failed for many chronic cases. Traditional Chinese medicine has a long tradition of differentiating and treating patterns under the disease-syndromes, which has been proved effective. It has helped the Chinese women and Asian women for thousands of years. Chinese medicine is really an safe option for the women who suffer from recurring infections of reproductive system.

Female Reproductive System



Infections of Women's Reproductive System in Chinese Medicine

In traditional Chinese medicine, the infectious diseases of women's reproductive system are discussed and treated under the categories of genital itching and leukorrhoea. The etiology and pathology of genital itching and leukorrhea dysfunction of Liver, Kidney and Spleen. In Chinese medicine pathology, Liver meridian surrounds the reproductive system and stores the Blood. The Kidney meridian controls the reproduction and opens to the anus and genitals. The Spleen is responsible for regulating the fluid metabolism through the absorption and transportation of body fluids and the removal of excessive water. Chinese medicine pathology believes that Liver Stagnation or Spleen deficiency produces Damp Heat, Damp Heat moves downward and accumulated around the reproductive system. Chinese medicine pathology also claims that the Liver or Kidney deficiency results in Blood deficiency, which turns to skin dryness in the genital area. The nutrients could not supply the genital area. In both cases, itching in the genital area, abnormal vaginal discharge, or ruptured abscesses in severe cases results. Two patterns, Damp Heat Pattern and Chronic Deficiency Pattern, are universally discussed and treated for reproductive system infections in Chinese medicine gynecology. The key differences between these two pattern are excessive vs. deficient, and acute vs. chronic.

Treatment of Infections of Women's Reproductive System in Chinese Medicine

Damp Heat Pattern: Damp heat could be caused by intercourse during periods, direct attack from bacteria or virus, stimulation from irregular menstruation or drugs for other conditions, habit of eating hot, spicy or greasy foods. A red tongue with yellow-greasy coating shows up and a wiry-rapid pulse is felt. The leading herbs to clear up the Damp Heat include phellodendron (Huang Bai), gardenia (Zhi Zi), peony bark (Mu Dan Pi), plaintain (Che Qian Zi), scullcap (Huang Qin), getinna (Long Dan Cao), sophora (Ku Shen), forthsia (Lian Qiao), honeysuckle (Jin Yin Hua). Modern pharmacological research and clinical research show the these herbs have in vitro inhibitory effects against many pathogenic bacteria, fungal organisms, various viruses. A widely used herbal formula is *Damp Heat Clearing* (Long Dan Xie Gan Tang), which was recorded in *Imperial Grace Formulary of the Great Peace Era*, in 1078, Song Dynasty.

Damp Heat Clearing Formula (Long Dan Xie Gan Tang)

Gentian (Long Dan Cao)
Scullcap (Huang Qin)
Gardenia (Zhi Zi)
Akebia (Mu Tong)
Plaintain (Che Qian Cao)
Alisma (Ze Xie)
Buplerum (Chai Hu)
Rehmannia (Di Huang)
Angelica (Dang Gui)
Licorice (Gan Cao)

Chronic Deficiency Pattern: Chronic deficiency could be caused by long-term illness, long-term use of immunity-suppression drugs, slow recovery from surgery or childbearing, ignorance of some illness or delay of treating some health disorders. A red tongue with pale coating appears and a thin-rapid pulse is felt. The leading Chinese herbs to balance the chronic deficiency include atractylodes (Bai Zhu), dioscorea (Shan Yao), ginseng (Ren Shen), astragalus (Huang Qi), codonopsis (Dang Shen), rehmannia (Di Huang), angelica (Dang Gui), white peony root (Bai Shao). Ancient wisdom teaches us that these herbs could strengthen, harmonize, balance the internal organs such as Kidney, and Spleen and tonify and nourish the Chi and Blood. Modern research found that these herbs could enhance the immunity, regulate the reproductive system, improve the circulation. Because of infections involved, some cleansing herbs are combined with these tonic herbs. Among many time-tested herbal formulas, *UrinClearing* (Zhi Bai Di Huang Wan) is widely used.

UrinClearing Formula (Zhi Bai Di Huang Wan)

Rehmannia (Shu Di Huang)
Cornus (Shan Zhu Yu)
Dioscorea (Shan Yao)
Alisma (Ze Xie)
Peony Bark (Mu Dan Pi)
Poria (Fu Ling)
Anemarrhena (Zhi Mu)
Phellodendron (Huang Bai)

Applications to Infectious Diseases of Women's Reproductive System

The traditional Chinese medicine approach is effectively applied to the following infectious diseases of women's reproductive system:

- **Vulvitis.** Vulvitis is an inflammation of the external area of the reproductive system. Vulvitis may be caused by parasitic infection, poor personal hygiene, chemical irritations, allergic reactions or retention of a foreign body. Symptoms include mild to severe inflammation, edema, redness, burning, pruritus, painful urination. Vulvitis may occur at any age and affects most women at some time.
- **Bacterial Vaginosis.** Bacterial vaginosis is the most common vaginal infection. It is caused by bacteria such as *Gardnerella vaginalis*, *Mobiluncus* species, and *Mycoplasma* species. Symptoms include an increased vaginal discharge with a fishy odor, redness, burning, or itching in the vaginal area.
- **Thrush.** Thrush is a yeast infection of the vagina caused by the *Candida albicans*, which is the second most common cause of vaginal infection. Thrush, or genital candidiasis, as the most common yeast infection, is caused by an overgrowth of a fungus which is commonly present in the vagina. Symptoms of yeast infection include a white, cottage cheese-like vaginal discharge, intensive itching, burning and redness in the vaginal area.
- **Trichomoniasis.** As the third most common cause of vaginal infections, trichomoniasis is caused by *Trichomonas vaginalis*, a one-celled organism. Symptoms include an irritating, frothy, yellow-green discharge with an unpleasant odor, redness, burning, or itching in the vaginal area, irritation during urination.
- **Atrophi Vaginitis.** Atrophi vaginitis is caused by a lack of hormonal stimulation to genital tissues. The decrease of estrogen can cause the vagina to become dry. The vaginal dryness may cause irritation, burning, itching or a feeling of pressure. Many women with surgical removal of the uterus and about thirty percent of postmenopausal women suffer from atrophi vaginitis.
- **Cervicitis.** Cervicitis is an inflammation of the cervix. Cervicitis is mostly caused by three sexually transmitted diseases, chlamydia, gonorrhea, and trichomonas. Symptoms include pronounced vaginal discharge following menstruation, profuse vaginal discharge with an unpleasant odor, irritation of the external genital area, intensive vaginal itchiness, a burning sensation during urination, lower back pain. Cervicitis affects half of all women at some point in their lives.
- **Genital Herpes.** Genital herpes is a sexually transmitted disease of the genital area or the skin around the rectum caused by herpes simplex virus. Symptoms include itching, tingling, and soreness, redness, painful blisters, circular sores, difficult urination. The herpes virus may spread to other body parts. And repeated return of the blisters and sores are common.
- **Nonspecific Bacterial Infections.** Nonspecific bacterial infections might be caused by bacteria such as *Staphylococcus*, *Streptococcus*, and *Bacillus coli*. Vaginal injuries or medications also might cause nonspecific bacterial infections. Symptoms include dripping sensation of vagina, burning sensation, an increased vaginal discharge, urgent or frequent urination, pelvic discomfort.

- **Pelvic Inflammatory Disease.** Pelvic inflammatory disease is an infection caused by bacteria such as *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* and *Chlamydia trachomatis*. Usually the infection starts in the vagina, moves up through the cervix, gets into the uterus, up the fallopian tubes and into the ovaries. Because pelvic inflammatory disease is an illness affecting a variety of inner reproductive organs, there is a risk that it cause a permanent damage to these organs.

OPENING THE BLOCKAGE TO REPRODUCTION: INFERTILITY

Infertility is a big problem for many couples these days - up to 15% of American couples are considered to be infertile. Once a couple decides to embark on fertility therapy with

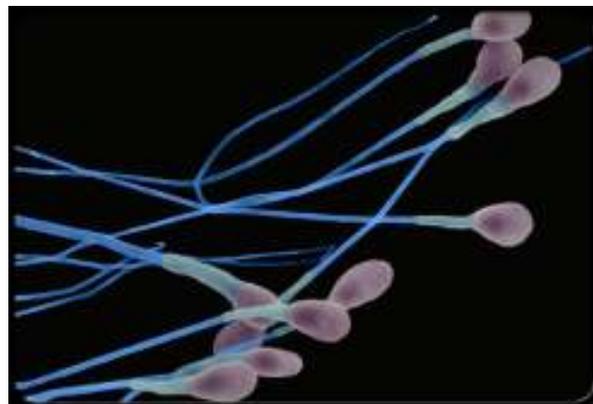


conventional Western medicine, they often face years of expensive, time-consuming and frustrating treatments. The introduction and popularization of traditional Chinese medicine in this country, however, provides new options for infertile couples. Chinese medicine has a long tradition of treating infertility in both men and women, and anecdotal success stories are a significant part of Chinese gynecology/obstetrics textbooks. Recent success stories in the United States include celebrity Vanna White, who happily attributed her healthy baby to acupuncture

treatments; and actress Annie Potts, who had a nightmare 15-year ordeal with conventional medicine until she discovered acupuncture, Chinese herbal medicine and Tai Chi, and safely delivered a 9-pound baby.

A standard definition of infertility is: "failure to achieve conception after a year or more of regular sexual activity with no contraceptive use." Infertility is also the inability to carry a pregnancy to full term. As stated above, up to fifteen percent of American couples have fertility problems, and twenty percent of married American women seek medical help for infertility in their childbearing years.

In Chinese medical theory, the Kidney is the internal organ which is responsible for reproduction, growth, and aging. When Kidney energy is insufficient to support normal growth and development, or becomes depleted by lifestyle factors such as poor diet, overwork, or excessive sexual activity, many health problems can result, including infertility. Kidney Deficiency is the most common cause of infertility. Other patterns that can result in infertility are Liver Qi Stagnation, Blood Stasis or Deficiency, and Dampness with Phlegm or Heat. In Western terms, Chinese medicine has a high success rate with functional infertility, which results from factors such as hormone imbalances, endocrine gland disorders, and emotional problems. Chinese medicine can also significantly improve some structural infertility problems, such as pelvic inflammatory disease, endometriosis, vaginitis, ovary dysfunction, and immune-system-related infertility.



Seven Patterns of Female Infertility

Seven patterns of female infertility are differentiated in traditional Chinese medicine. The causes and clinical manifestations of each pattern are noted, as well as the leading herbal formulas used to treat the pattern.

Kidney Yang Deficiency: Chronic illness or long-standing weakness is the origin of this pattern. Clinical manifestations include: delayed menstruation; irregular periods; scanty, light-colored menses; fatigue; dizziness; ringing in the ears; dull-pale complexion; back soreness; lack of sexual desire; cold limbs; loose stools; long-drawn-out urination with a thin stream or dribbling; a thick or puffy tongue body with a white tongue coating; and a thin-soft pulse. Time-tested herbal formulas for this pattern include *Yu Lin Zhu*, *Wu Zi Yan Zong Wan*, *Right Restoration Formula* (You Gui Wan), and *Kidney Yang Tonic* (Jin Gui Shen Qi Wan).

Kidney Yang Tonic (Jin Gui Shen Qi Wan)

Rehmannia (Shu Di Huang)
Dioscorea (Shan Yao)
Peony Root (Mu Dan Pi)
Poria (Fu Ling)
Cornus (Shan Zhu Yu)
Alisma (Ze Xie)
Cinnamon (Rou Gui)
Aconite (Fu Zi)

Kidney Yin Deficiency: Constitutional (genetically inherited) weakness is the underlying cause of this pattern. Clinical manifestations include: early menstruation; irregular periods; scanty menses with red color and no clots; palpitations of the heart; fatigue; dizziness; ringing in the ears; back soreness; dry mouth, dry bowel movements; a feeling of heat in the palms, soles of the feet, and the upper chest; low-grade fever in the afternoon; a red tongue body with a thin tongue coating; and a thin and rapid pulse. Top formulas for this pattern include *Kidney Yin Tonic* (Liu Wei Di Huang Wan), *Left Restoration Formula* (Zuo Gui Wan plus Wu Zi Yan Zong Wan), and *Essence Nourishing* (Yang Jing Zhong Yu Tang Plus).

Blood Stasis: Surgery, emotional trauma, or excessive menstrual bleeding are the origins of this pattern. Clinical manifestations include: infertility; scanty periods; delayed periods with dark purple menstrual blood and blood clots; painful menstruation; frequent abdominal pain; a pale tongue body with purple dots; and a thin-wiry pulse. Widely-used Chinese herbal formulas include *StagnationEASE* (Xue Fu Zhu Yu Tang), and *StagnationEASE* plus Shao Fu Zhu Yu Tang.

StagnationEASE (Xue Fu Zhu Yu Tang)

Persica Seed (Tao Ren)
Safflower (Hong Hua)
Angelica (Dang Gui)
Rehmannia (Sheng Di Huang)
Cnidium (Chuan Qiong)
Red Peony Root (Chi Shao)
Cyathula (Niu Xi)
Platycodon (Jie Geng)
Buplerum (Chai Hu)
Aurantium (Zhi Ke)
Licorice (Gan Cao)

Liver Qi Stagnation: Emotional stress is the origin of this pattern. Clinical manifestations include: inability to conceive for many years; irregular periods; abdominal pain with periods; scanty, pale-colored menses; dark-colored menses with clots; painful distention of breasts; depression; irritability before periods; a pale-red tongue body with a white-thin tongue coating; and a wiry pulse. Popular herbal formulas include *DepressEASE Formula* (Kai Yu Zhong Yu Tang), and *DistentionEASE* (Hei Xiao Yao San).

DistentionEASE (Hei Xiao Yao San)

Bupleurum (Chai Hu)
Angelica (Dang Gui)
White Peony (Bai Shao)
Atractylodes (Bai Zhu)
Poria (Fu Ling)
Licorice (Gan Cao)
Mint (Bo He)
Ginger (Gan Jiang)
Rehmannia (Di Huang)

Damp-Phlegm Obstruction: Chronic overweight or the habitual consumption of greasy, oily foods are the origins of this pattern. Clinical manifestations include: infertility; irregular periods; delayed period or absence of period; menses with blood clots; weight gain; white, sticky vaginal discharge; irritability; dizziness; palpitations; chest congestion; nausea; gray tongue body with a white-sticky tongue coating; and a slippery pulse. Herbal formulas for this pattern include *UterinEASE* (Qi Gong Wan), and *Removing Phelgm Formula* (Cang Fu Dao Tan Wan).

Removing Phelgm Formula (Cang Fu Dao Tan Wan)

Poria (Fu Ling)
Pinellia (Ban Xia)
Tangerine Peel (Chen Pi)
Licorice (Gan Cao)
Lanceagrey Atractylodes (Cang Zhu)
Cyperus (Xiang Fu)
Arisematis (Nan Xing)
Aurantium (Zhi Ke)
Ginger (Sheng Jiang)
Leaven (Shen Qu)

Damp Heat: This Dampness pattern can also be caused by the habitual consumption of fatty foods and alcohol, and by weak Spleen energy. Clinical manifestations include: failure to conceive after the last delivery; irregular periods; delayed periods; constant spotting; white vaginal discharge; pains in the loins; abdominal pain which is worse with menstruation and fatigue; low-grade fever; pre-menstrual breast distention; a red tongue body with a white-sticky or yellow-sticky tongue coating; and a wiry-rapid pulse. *DampHeatEASE* (Jie Du Si Wu Tang) is widely used to eliminate Damp Heat.

DampHeatEASE (Jie Du Si Wu Tang)

Coptis (Huang Lian)
Scutellaria (Huang Qin)
Phellodendron (Huang Bai)
Gardenia (Zhi Zi)
Rehmannia (Di Huang)
Angelica (Dang Gui)
White Peony (Bai Shao)
Cnidium (Chuan Qiong)

Blood Deficiency: This pattern can result from loss of blood due to trauma, surgery, or childbirth; and from insufficient blood production due to Deficient Qi or Congealed Blood. Clinical manifestations include: failure to conceive; delayed periods with scanty, light-colored menses, or copious, watery menses; absence of menstruation; pale complexion; a thin, weak body; dizziness; palpitations; breathlessness; insomnia; poor memory; tiredness; a pale tongue body with a thin-white tongue coating; and a thin-soft pulse. *Wen Tu Yu Ling Tang*, *Spleen Heart Tonic* (Gui Pi Tang), and *Tonifying Blood/Kidney Formula* (Wen Shen Bu Xue Tang) are effective formulas for this pattern.

Tonifying Blood/Kidney Formula (Wen Shen Bu Xue Tang)

Codonopsis (Dang Shen)
Angelica (Dang Gui)
Millettia (Ji Xue Teng)
Rehmannia (Di Huang)
Psoralea (Bu Gu Zhi)
Epimedium (Xian Ling Pi)
Morinda (Ba Ji Tian)
Curculiginis (Xian Mao)
Placenta (Zi He Che)

Chinese Medicine for Infertility

Part I

If you lived in China right now, you would probably be hearing a lot of conversations about having a baby. In Chinese culture, the first year of a millennium has tremendous positive energy. Besides being the beginning of a millennium, the year 2000 is also the year of the Dragon, which is another token of good fortune. Consequently, lots of Chinese women have been anxious to get pregnant and have a 'lucky baby.' It looks like it's going to be a lucky year for several of my clients at TCM Health Center who come for infertility treatment. One of them delivered twin boys in January, and several more will have babies in the next few months. When infertility treatments are successful, it is one of my favorite things about practicing Chinese medicine.

A woman who came to my clinic for infertility, said, 'I read that infertility rates are higher in this country than anywhere else in the world. Why is this so?' This is a very good question. The United States does have a high infertility rate-17 percent, and this rate continues going up.

If you were to look at the data about fertility across the world, you would find that the Chinese have the lowest infertility rate, less than 3 percent. What could make this kind of difference? Some people even think that the Chinese must be born with a stronger or better reproductive system than other people. This is not true. All people are born with the same potentials. Differences in fertility potentials depend to a large extent on environmental and cultural factors. If you visited any full-service hospital of Chinese medicine in China, you would find the infertility clinic to be one of the busiest places there. Most hospitals have two infertility clinics-one for men and one for women. Many doctors of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) specialize in this area of practice. It's not that the Chinese have fewer problems with infertility than Americans; it is my belief that, for a majority of infertility patients, Chinese medicine provides more effective approach than that the approach that has been taken in the West to address the problem.

From what my patients have told me, Western medicine tends to approach conception as a full-scale strategic battle, where the emphasis is on sperm, eggs, and reproductive organs. Often, the wants, needs, and even the overall health of the patient are secondary considerations. This process also tends to be very high-tech and expensive, prohibiting many people from even making the attempt. Chinese medicine assesses the state of health of an individual or a couple in a holistic way, taking everything about them into account, paying attention to what the typical diet is like, how much exercise or how much rest a person gets, etc.

TCM treatment for infertility is generally a combination of acupuncture treatments, Chinese herbs, and dietary medications. In some cases, where the Fallopian tubes are completely blocked by scar tissue, for example, surgery is the best treatment. But most cases, where conception is prevented by an underlying hormone imbalance, low sperm count, or endometriosis, Chinese medicine is generally extremely effective.

Infertility is a very complicated condition, and either or both partners may have several contributing factors. Western medicine diagnosed hormone deficiencies or imbalances, scarring from infections or sexually transmitted diseases, overgrowth of reproductive tissues, and other factors as the causes of infertility. Chinese medicine has its own special vocabulary, and speaks of problems with the primary organ systems such as Kidney Yang deficiency or Liver Chi stagnation, or problems with a fundamental substance of the body, such as blood stagnation, or of pathological factors such as Phlegm accumulation or Damp Heat.

These are all common conditions, but each person's history and particular manifestation of his or her condition varies. In order to give readers a clearer idea of how Chinese medicine diagnoses and treats various infertility problems. I will present several case studies from my practice.

Part II

For many couples, infertility can become the central issue of their lives, both as individuals and as a couple. Just going through fertility testing can be expensive and time consuming. Techniques such as harvesting eggs or in vitro fertilization can raise the price of conception beyond the ability of many people to pay.

In the United States, where infertility rates are very high, conception is treated as a technical, science-based problem. In China, which has one of the lowest infertility rates in the world, the approach is more holistic. Patients are assessed in terms of their energy level, diet, rest, and exercise patterns, etc. In certain cases, such as blocked Fallopian tubes, surgery is the most effective treatment. But for a majority of patients with problems such as a hormone imbalance or low sperm count, Chinese medicine can be an effective way to bring the body back to balance. Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) treatment generally combines acupuncture, Chinese herbs, and diet modifications. This type of treatment requires that a patient be conscientious about getting acupuncture, taking herbs, and eating a proper diet.

Infertility is generally a complex problem, and may involve one or both partners who are trying to conceive. There are no quick fixes and no guarantees but for many people, Chinese medicine has been an affordable, I present the cases of two of my male infertility patients.

When Mr. Green came to see me, he was a 49-year-old gentleman married for nine years. He had been diagnosed with a low sperm count and low sperm motility. He was given hormone treatments which not only didn't work, but which drastically changed his personality. He went from being quiet and laid-back to being aggressive, with violent thought patterns. After this experience, he was referred to me by his sister-in-law, who I had successfully treated for infertility.

According to his history and other signs, Mr. Green fell into the pattern of Kidney Yang deficiency. The Kidney is the organ which TCM considers to be primarily responsible for reproduction, growth, and aging. Yang is the male principle of the universe, which balances with Yin, the female principle. A man with Kidney Yang deficiency can certainly have a low sperm count, and there are often other problems as well, such as lack of sexual desire, impotence, and sexual dysfunction. In Mr. Green's case, treatment was aimed at restoring Yang and tonifying the Kidney.

Specific treatments will be different from person to person, but for Mr. Green I recommended two acupuncture treatments a week for six to seven weeks, and then weekly treatments after that for another two months. This was accompanied by the Chinese herbal formula JIN GUI SHEN QI WAN (kidney yang tonic) and several other herbs. Chinese herbs can be taken in capsule form or boiled in water to make an herbal tea.

In addition, I referred him to my associate, Dr. Xirong He, for moxibustion treatment. Moxa is dried, formed into cigar-shaped sticks, and burned over acupuncture points. Sometimes sections of the 'cigar' are cut off, attached to the handle of an acupuncture needle and burned. Moxibustion treatment is not painful at all. It has a deeply warming affect, and most people feel much better after it is done. Unfortunately, moxibustion treatments are time-consuming and require good room ventilation, so a lot of practitioners are unwilling to do them.

Mr. Green was a wonderful patient. He took his herbs and got acupuncture treatment with complete dedication. In a three month follow-up check with his doctor, it was found that his sperm count and sperm motility were dramatically increased. Today, Mr. Green has a two-year-old daughter.

Mr. Anderson is an athletic, healthy young man in his late 20s. He and his wife came in together, and he seemed embarrassed to tell me his story. At the age of 15, he suffered a bad accident that severely injured his testicles. The ER doctor told his parents that the injury would cause scar tissue to form, and that his scar tissue might make it impossible for him to produce sperm normally.

After the accident, Mr. Anderson recovered completely and pretty much forgot about what the doctor had said. But, later after being married seven years, his wife began to wonder why she had not been able to get pregnant. A series of tests on Mr. Anderson showed that every category of sperm production was absolutely abnormal and that it would be almost impossible for him to impregnate his wife. There was no way of telling how much scar tissue had formed, and I was not very confident when I saw this test results. But in my experience, it is always worth trying the modalities of Chinese Medicine to see what will happen. We decided to work together for three months, using acupuncture, Chinese herbs, and dietary modification. Like Mr. Green, Mr. Anderson was a good patient, even though he wasn't happy giving up some of his favorite foods. At the end of the three-month treatment period, he went back to his doctor to repeat the fertility testing. He called me from the doctor's office, practically crying on the phone-every one of the tests were now within normal limits. The chances are now very good that Mr. and Mrs. Anderson will be able to conceive a child normally.

Part III

In the last article, we talked about infertility in men. Women with infertility generally present more complicated cases than men. Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) recognizes many different kinds of imbalances and deficiencies that can lead to infertility in females. In the next few articles, I will talk specifically about female infertility and how to treat it by using Chinese herbs, acupuncture, and dietary modifications. Because endometriosis is the leading cause of infertility in women, I will present two cases of endometriosis in this article and the next.

Tanya is a 39-year-old woman who has suffered with infertility for five years. After she had been married for several years she was ready to have baby, but she could not get pregnant. She went to see a doctor, and was told that her infertility was related to endometriosis. She tried all the conventional approaches to treating endometriosis with no results. When she searched for information on the Internet, she discovered that acupuncture and Chinese herbs are widely used to treat endometriosis and infertility in Asia and have a very high success rate. She also read several scientific studies on the subject. She became very excited to think that there may be another way to get help, and she scheduled an appointment in my clinic. I immediately started her on a program of raw herbs and twice-weekly acupuncture treatments. Raw herbs means that you take dry herbs in their natural state, boil them, and drink the tea which results. This is the most potent form of herbs in Chinese medicine, stronger than pills or capsules. After four months of this treatment, Tanya got pregnant. In a few months now, we will see her new baby.

Endometriosis-related infertility is the commonest type that a practitioner will see. A severe case of endometriosis, especially if multiple surgeries have been done, can be very difficult to treat. Fortunately, Tanya responded after four months of treatment, and was able to conceive. Sometimes the condition can be improved with Chinese medicine, but conception is still not possible. In TCM, the signs and symptoms that a body exhibits in a state of disease

or imbalance is called a pattern. There are several patterns that can cause endometriosis, but most often we see women who have a pattern called Congealed Blood with Phlegm Accumulation. Tanya had this pattern. In basic terms, Chi and Blood are two fundamental substances of the body, and they travel around the body in a system of vessels. Chi, or energy, travels in several systems of vessels called meridians. Blood has its own vessel system, of course, but Blood can also travel in Chi meridians, as can Phlegm, which is a pathogenic substance. When any substance becomes stuck or obstructed in a meridian, this always causes pain and dysfunction. ‘Congealed Blood’ is a condition where blood becomes stuck in a meridian. When there are gynecological problems, the blood is usually stuck in the Liver meridian, which encircles the reproductive organs in men and women. Phlegm is a substance which is created by an accumulation and concentration of dampness over a longer period of time. When water is not metabolized well and there is water retention in the tissues; or when a person eats a lot of mucus-producing foods like dairy products, then the pathological factor of Phlegm will eventually result. Phlegm can accumulate in any part of the body, but it often tends to sink into the lower parts of the body, obstructing the free flow of Chi and Blood.

The treatment strategy in Tanya’s case was to open the blocked meridians and expel Phlegm. Since diet has such a strong effect on our health, it is important to avoid foods that contribute to an imbalanced state. Following a good diet makes the acupuncture and herbs more effective because you are strengthening your system with nutritious foods instead of depleting your system with foods that are unhealthy for you. I asked Tanya to give up the foods that can contribute to phlegm and blockage, including cheese, ice cream, ice cold drinks, sugar, and a few others. Some of these foods were favorites of hers, but she was willing to give the treatment her full cooperation.

The first change that Tanya noticed after several weeks of bi-weekly treatments was that her menstrual pain decreased quite a bit. Even if a woman is not trying to get pregnant, treatment for endometriosis can definitely reduce painful periods and improve quality of life.

Not all cases of endometriosis are diagnosed as the Phlegm Accumulation pattern. There are other patterns that can produce the painful congestion of endometriosis. In the next article, I will discuss the Blood Stasis pattern.

Part IV

In last month’s article, I began to discuss infertility in women, presenting a case of endometriosis-related infertility. There can be a number of causes for infertility, but endometriosis is the most common cause in the U.S. and China.

In Chinese medicine, diseases and imbalances are diagnosed as patterns. A pattern is defined by the signs and symptoms that a person exhibits, and patients will often present more than one pattern. In the case I discussed last month, the woman had a combined pattern of Congealed Blood (also called Blood Stasis) and Phlegm Accumulation, with the Phlegm Accumulation being the predominant issue. Her Western-medicine diagnosis was endometriosis. This month, I will talk about Jean. Jean also has a Western-medicine diagnosis of endometriosis, but her predominant Chinese medicine pattern is Blood Stasis.

Chinese medicine believes that Blood travels both in the blood vessels and also in the energy meridians of the body. It sounds strange to say that blood can circulate in an energy meridian, but Blood has several aspects in Chinese medicine. There is the physical aspect of blood - the blood that you see when you cut yourself - and this physical aspect only circulates in the blood vessels. There is also the energetic, or functional aspect of blood, which can travel in both blood and energy vessels. The functional aspect of Blood is as a primary Yin

substance in the body. Blood is called the ‘mother of Chi’ because it moistens and nourishes every cell. It also nourishes the feminine principle that exists in every human being. Ideally, Blood circulates freely through the vessels and meridians, but sometimes it becomes stuck in the meridians or in the tissues, and this is called Congealed Blood or Blood Stasis. A bruise is a superficial type of Blood Stasis involving the physical aspect of blood. When Blood is stuck in the meridians, the main symptom people notice is pain, which is usually described as constant, fixed, stabbing pain. When Blood is stuck in tissues, it often produces lumps, tumors, or masses, which can also be painful. Endometriosis, uterine fibroids, and ovarian cysts are all examples of Blood Stasis in women.

Jean is a thirty-five year old patient who originally came to see me for problems related to a car accident. These injuries cleared up well with acupuncture and Chinese herbal treatment, and Jean began to talk about her infertility issues. She has a successful career and has been happily married for nine years, but she and her husband are both eager to have children, and they have not been able to. Jean felt enough pressure about this situation to visit a fertility clinic. After some diagnostic tests, they told her that she had endometriosis, and that was probably the reason she had not been able to conceive. The doctor at the clinic decided to try fertility drugs with Jean. He believed that the endometriosis was a relatively mild condition, and that fertility drugs could override the endometriosis problem. Unfortunately, the drugs did not work, and at this point, Jean was very hesitant to try this method of fertility treatment again. She didn’t like the side effects from the drugs, and it is an expensive treatment with no guarantee of results.

After I began to treat Jean’s Blood Stasis issue with acupuncture and Chinese herbs, her symptoms improved relatively fast. The patient that I discussed last month, Tanya, had endometriosis based in a pattern of Phlegm Accumulation, and it took quite a while to resolve because it was a severe case. But Jean’s Blood Stasis pattern was not as serious or as deep-seated. Even though both of these cases are called endometriosis in Western medicine, they are seen as two different patterns in Chinese medicine, so the acupuncture points that I used and the herbal formulas that the two women took were quite different. Jean’s response to treatment was wonderful - her pelvic discomfort lessened, and she became pregnant. In a few months she will be a first-time mother.

In China, where both Western-style and traditional Chinese medicine are practiced, gynecologists always recommend their infertility patients to try traditional Chinese medicine first. It is far less invasive, and there is much less risk from herbal formulas than from potent drugs.

Part V

This series of articles is about the traditional Chinese medicine approach to infertility. Chinese medicine sees people as a whole, taking lifestyle issues such as diet, exercise, and rest into account, and using acupuncture, herbs, and dietary modifications to rebalance the body’s energies. When unhealthy patterns within the body are cleared up, and when depleted energy is restored, it is often possible for people to conceive. Western medicine fertility therapy can be very effective, but the emphasis is on powerful drugs that override the body’s natural functioning.

In this article, I will discuss a common problem for older women who want to conceive: Kidney-energy deficiency. Pam came to see me when she was 43. She and her husband had been trying to have a baby for several years, and she had taken fertility drugs without success. Her doctor tried the highest dose possible of the fertility drug, but she only produced a few, unfertilizable eggs, and the doctor told her she might just be too old to have a

child. Pam and I decided to work together, because there was a chance that Chinese medicine could help her, although even in Chinese medicine theory, age is considered to be a significant factor in fertility.

In the ancient Chinese text, Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine, it says 'When the energy of all the organs is full, the excess energy stored in the kidney is excreted for the purpose of conception. But [when] the organs have aged and their energies have become depleted, the kidney reservoir becomes empty, marking the end of the power of conception.' The Kidney is responsible for reproduction, growth, and aging. When we are conceived, the Kidney Essences of our parents combine to produce a new being. This is very similar to the Western idea of genetic inheritance. When we are born, our basic, hereditary constitution is set, giving us our lifetime potential of physical development and aging. The lifestyle we choose can affect this potential. If we wear ourselves out with work or stress, or if we eat poor diets or abuse our bodies with alcohol, cigarettes, etc., we will 'use up' our Kidney Essence at a rapid rate, and will therefore age more rapidly than if we follow a balanced and moderate lifestyle.

Pam was in relatively good health when she came to see me, but she was entering her premenopausal time, when the Kidney energy normally declines. Becoming pregnant and carrying a baby to delivery is a very heavy demand on the Kidney's resources, even for a young woman. Because Pam saw this effort as her last chance to conceive, she was very dedicated to the treatment. We started with acupuncture treatments every other day, and she cooked and drank a strong herbal formula on a daily basis. At the same time, she continued to see her regular doctor, which I encouraged. After several months of acupuncture and herbs, her doctor tried the fertility drug again, using only half the dose that he had last time, and they harvested twelve good eggs. The doctor was surprised, and Pam was thrilled. The only difference was Pam's use of Chinese medicine.

It is standard practice to stop acupuncture and herbs once a pregnancy starts, as long as everything is going well. Unfortunately, the first pregnancy did not go well: the baby died a few weeks after it was implanted. This often happens when a woman is older, or has deficient energy to start with - the uterus is too old to nourish the baby. Pam resumed the acupuncture and herbs and tried again. When she was pregnant the second time, we continued with the acupuncture and herbs until her fourth month in order to give her extra support and nourishment. This time she had healthy twin boys. They are seven months old now, and the parents are very happy.

Pam's case shows a successful collaboration between Chinese medicine and Western medicine. In my experience, women do extremely well using these two modalities in conjunction, especially if the Western approach has not worked. Some women hesitate to try Chinese medicine because they think they will have to give up on their Western treatment. In China, it is common to use traditional Chinese medicine in combination with Western medicine. Doctors there have a good idea of what kind of medicine will work best for different conditions, and they use whichever one is most effective for the patient. I hope that this will eventually be the trend in the American health care system, too.

Part VI

The subject of infertility is complex. There are many reasons why men and women can have difficulty conceiving a child, and there is usually more than one problem involved. In previous articles on infertility, I have discussed male infertility, as well as endometriosis and age-related infertility in women. This article presents two cases where the problem appears to be rooted in diet and/or stress.

Western medicine tends to focus primarily on the reproductive organs and sex hormones of the infertile, using surgery and drugs to ‘correct’ a dysfunction. Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) is holistic by nature, taking every aspect of a patient’s life into consideration. When there is an internal imbalance, Chinese medicine examines the patient’s diet and lifestyle very seriously. Any practitioner you see should be concerned with these issues, because they are basic to good health and well-being.

When I first saw Tina, she was twenty-nine, and had been trying to get pregnant for six years. She had tried in vitro fertilization many times with no success. As a teenager, Tina had an eating disorder. She didn’t get her first period until she was eighteen, and still suffers from irregular periods. Interruption of the menstrual cycle is almost always a sign of stress. Complete suspension of normal menstruation indicates a highly stressed body. For a young woman, Tina had quite a few problems from a TCM point of view. She was deficient in three fundamental body substances: Chi, Yin, and Blood; and she also had a condition called Stagnant or Congealed Blood. This congealed blood was blocking the flow of Chi/energy through the meridians (energy pathways). In Tina, the Liver, Kidney, and Spleen meridians were affected. It is a challenge to treat a case like Tina, because there is no one remedy that will treat all of her patterns.

First, I decided to unblock the congealed blood from the energy meridians, using Chinese herbal formulas and acupuncture. This is like taking a log jam out of a river so the water can flow easily again. Once the energy pathways were open, we began to tonify the deficient blood, Chi, and Yin. If you tried to tonify the deficiencies first, before clearing the obstruction, it would be like pouring more water in behind the log jam - there would be a flood, or energy would back up and make the problem worse. This treatment strategy applies to other conditions where there is obstruction, like pain or depression. Sometimes people will complain of having a bad reaction to acupuncture or Chinese herbs. This might be because the practitioner tried to correct all the blockages and deficiencies at the same time, instead of taking them in order.

For Tina’s combined problems, we used six different herbal formulas at various stages of treatment, and changed acupuncture points as needed. After five months of treatment, Tina’s depleted body was restored enough for her to get pregnant naturally. Her daughter is a year old now.

Some infertility specialists believe that 30% of the infertility they see is related to stress. This may be why infertility rates are higher among well-educated, professional women. In China, it seems that housewives and women who live in villages are more fertile than urban, professional women. There are many cases of infertility where there is no medical explanation. Since I came to the United States I have seen a lot of workaholic women who eat very poorly, and they frequently have problems with infertility, endometriosis, PMS, and menstrual problems in general.

Chris is a good example of the difficulties that a busy, stressful life can bring. She is a 35-year-old woman, an attorney’s assistant, with a nine-year-old daughter. She has been trying unsuccessfully to have another child for the last five or six years. Her doctor did a lot of tests, but could find nothing wrong with Chris or her husband. In Chinese medicine terms, Chris had the kind of deficiencies and imbalances that result from being overtired or overworked, and from eating an inadequate diet. When I asked her to keep a food diary for a week so I could see how she ate, she said she was too embarrassed to write it down. She generally ate a donut or cold cereal for breakfast, then skipped lunch or grabbed some fast food. After work, she was too tired to cook, and ate more junk food for dinner.

She couldn't remember the last time she cooked a meal.

Acupuncture and herbs can help a lot in nourishing and balancing a woman's body to increase her chances of getting pregnant, but there are no magic bullets or instant cures. A woman with this kind of stress in her life also needs to make a lot of changes in her lifestyle, eating habits, exercise routine, etc. I always tell my patients that I will have a hard time keeping them in good health if they work 80 hours per week, with no time to eat properly, get enough exercise, or even just relax. Western medicine has also come to see that stress can trigger many health conditions such as heart attacks and ulcers.

Chris decided it was time to reorganize her priorities, and she made a lot of changes in her lifestyle. She joined a Tai Chi class, took long walks with her dog, and made a real effort to cook and eat a proper diet. All the efforts that she made to help herself made the acupuncture and herbs more effective to correct her imbalance and deficiency. Within a year, she got pregnant.

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE FOR INSOMNIA

Nothing is worse than not sleeping well. That is what I hear every day from people who suffer from insomnia. When we can't sleep well, nothing is right. We are tired, moody, irritable, our muscles are stiff, our head hurts, we can hardly think or function. Furthermore, lack of adequate sleep can cause serious health problems. Most doctors now believe that chronic insomnia brings on the symptoms of fibromyalgia and contributes to cardiovascular stress, not to mention the countless car accidents caused by people falling asleep at the wheel.



Western medicine and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) have different approaches to insomnia. To Western doctors, insomnia is the inability to sleep soundly. If there is no obvious physical reason, such as pain, for the sleeplessness, it will usually be seen as an emotional problem such as stress, anxiety, or depression. A patient with a mild case of insomnia is told to "relax more, cut back on caffeine, try a hot bath or warm milk before bedtime." For chronic insomnia, the usual response is sleeping pills or anti-depressants.

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In TCM, a primary concept is the idea of "root and branch." Symptoms like insomnia are considered to be the branches of a disease. The root of a disease is a dysfunction or imbalance of the fundamental substances (Chi, blood, Yin, Yang, Jing, Shen), or of the major organ systems (Lungs, Heart, Spleen, Liver, Kidneys). When a person suffers from insomnia, the two organs most often out of balance are the Heart and the Liver. Each of these two organs houses a specific aspect of the spirit. If these organs are out of balance, they will not be able to house the spirit properly, and the spirit will wander. (TCM, although a very complex medical system, had its origins in Taoism, and before that in shamanism. Therefore, there is a spiritual consciousness built into TCM theory.) A wandering spirit, or Shen disturbance, can manifest in a number of ways, including mood disorders and heart palpitations, but insomnia is one of the commonest symptoms.

There is a lot of space devoted to insomnia in classical Chinese medicine textbooks. Several different types of insomnia are noted, and the differences point to different origins of the problem. The commonest types of insomnia are as follows:

- **Dream-disturbed sleep:** Nightmares normally indicate a disorder of the Gall Bladder meridian. Dreams in which we go over and over the same ground, walking in a maze, reliving aspects of our jobs or our relationships generally are due to a Spleen/Heart imbalance. People with this problem say, "I can't shut my mind off."
- **Difficulty falling asleep:** This is usually related to an excess condition of the Liver or Liver and Gall Bladder. People will lie awake, tossing and turning for hours.
- **Waking up easily:** Many people can fall asleep easily, but then they wake up later and find it difficult to go back to sleep again. They may be awake for an hour or so, or may not go back to sleep at all. These people have a deficiency pattern, often a Heart/Spleen deficiency.

- **Waking up at a specific time every night:** For example, some people regularly wake up at three o'clock in the morning. In Chinese medicine theory, the body's energy (Chi) circulates through the twelve principal meridians over a 24-hour period. Each meridian relates to an internal organ. If a person wakes or has some unusual symptoms at the same time every day, it is probable that there is an imbalance in the organ system that is "highlighted" at that time of day. Energy peaks in the Liver meridian at 3:00 a.m., which is why people often wake up then. Liver problems can result from unexpressed anger, stress triggering Liver Chi stagnation, and Liver Fire.
- **Other symptoms:** When a Chinese medicine practitioner is analyzing a patient's sleeping problems, he narrows down the possibilities by looking for other symptoms that are characteristic of a particular disorder. For example, people with the Liver Fire pattern get angry easily, and have Heat signs such as a red face, dark yellow urine, and dry bowel movements. People with Spleen/Heart deficiency tend to be forgetful, have poor concentration, feel very fatigued, and are always worrying about something. People with a Kidney/Heart disharmony can have tinnitus, palpitations, weakness in the low back, feel light-headed, and get flushed easily. Chinese medicine practitioners also examine their patients' tongues and feel the pulse for further indications of which particular pattern is predominant.

Everyone wants to sleep well and have sweet dreams every night. Nobody wants insomnia, but some people have been suffering with it for a long time. In my practice, patients come in with these complaints every day: "I've only slept a couple of hours a night for seven years." "I have not slept well for 15 years since my divorce." "I have been taking sleeping pills for years. It all started when our company went down." "I was diagnosed with fibromyalgia, and my doctor said my aches and pains are related to my sleeping disorder. Can you do anything?"

In the first part of this section, I mentioned that Chinese medicine sees insomnia as a symptom of an imbalance in either the fundamental substances of the body (Chi, Blood, Yin, Yang, Shen), or of the major organ systems (Lungs, Heart, Spleen, Liver, Kidneys). Insomnia most often results from imbalances of the Heart or Liver. I also outlined the principal types of insomnia, as described in Chinese medicine textbooks: dream-disturbed sleep; difficulty falling asleep; waking early; and waking at a specific time every night. This article will discuss the Chinese medicine approach to treating insomnia.

In this country, people say "acupuncture" as a shorthand term for traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). Most TCM practitioners also include Chinese herbal formulas and dietary modifications in their treatments. When treating insomnia, acupuncture and Chinese herbal formulas are combined for the quickest and most effective results. Not every insomnia patient will be treated with the same herbs or acupuncture points, however. A particular combination of signs and symptoms is called a pattern, and different patterns are treated differently. For example, students who are burned out on studying and can't shut their minds off usually fall into a Spleen/Heart imbalance pattern; whereas elderly people who have trouble sleeping are generally manifesting a Heart/Kidney imbalance.

One of the most popular herbs in China for treating insomnia is Suan Zao Ren. This is the kernel of a small red date that grows wild in the mountainous areas of northern China. The branches of this shrubby plant are so thorny that farmers use it as fencing to keep their animals contained. I remember the scratches I got as a little girl when I visited the mountains and picked the dates for their sweet/sour flavor. Suan Zao Ren has the effect of nourishing Heart Shen and Liver Blood, as well as regulating Liver Chi. This makes it very effective at "calming the spirit" and dealing with stress. I often prescribe a formula which has

Suan Zao Ren as a principal component when my patients have insomnia due to a Liver/Heart imbalance. For people with a Spleen/Heart disorder, such as the overworked students mentioned above, *Gui Pi Wan* is a useful herbal formula.

The Kidney/Heart disharmony pattern is also very common in this country, especially in perimenopausal women and the elderly. *Tian Wang Bu Xin Dan* is an old and well-studied Chinese herbal formula that is often used for Kidney/Heart imbalances. Several studies have proven that it can help people to sleep deeply and stay asleep longer.

People who take this formula tend to feel more refreshed and energetic in the morning. It can also be used to treat the nervous exhaustion that comes with depression.

Acupuncture is also effective treatment for insomnia. Many of my patients who come for other problems such as migraine, back pain, or depression notice that their sleeping has improved, too, even though they may not have considered insomnia to be a problem. Patients will comment that they've been sleeping really well since they started acupuncture.

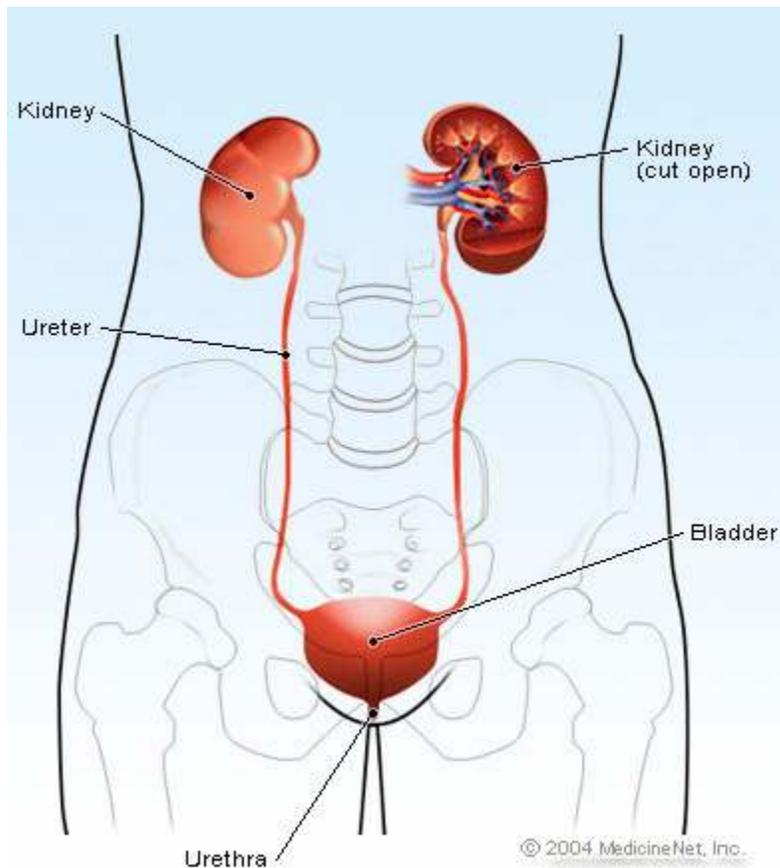
One of my patients had multiple health problems including chronic insomnia. She had only slept one or two hours a night for many years, and suffered from fibromyalgia, which is generally considered to be related to chronic insomnia. After acupuncture treatments twice a week for three or four weeks, plus herbs, her sleep improved dramatically. She could sleep five or six hours a night without waking up, and the intensity of her other symptoms began to diminish. She also began to cut down on the number of prescription medications she had been taking. Because her case was so severe, I am still seeing her once every week or two, but she is practically a new woman. Now she has a normal sleeping pattern, and her aches and pains have pretty much disappeared. She said, "You don't know how wonderful you feel when you can sleep well. The world is very different. My mood is good; I have energy; I'm not in pain; and I don't need to take all those pills.

Maggie is a patient who comes in specifically for insomnia. She is a young woman with a stressful job and a small child to raise. She said, "I don't know what happened with my nervous system - I just can't sleep. Either I can't fall asleep, or I sleep one or two hours, then I'm wide awake for several hours. Since my son was born, everything is worse." After treatment with herbs and acupuncture, she is doing well. One day she told me that she had just called her parents and told them about her wonderful experience. She was encouraging them to try acupuncture because they were in their mid-70s and had been taking sleeping pills for years.

Acupuncture has many positive benefits. It is safe (sterile disposable needles are always used), it is effective for a wide variety of health problems, and it is virtually free of side effects. It has been scientifically demonstrated that acupuncture can have an effect on the body's central nervous system, and can increase levels of several neurotransmitters, including serotonin. Acupuncture promotes natural sleeping patterns, and doesn't have the hangover effect that most sleeping pills do. If you have been having problems with your sleep, it may be worthwhile to give acupuncture a try before taking heavy-duty medications. If you are currently taking sleeping pills and are bothered by the side effects, consider talking to your doctor or a Chinese medicine practitioner about alternatives.

USE ACTUPUNCTURE FOR INTERSTITIAL CYSTITIS

Over the last few years, I have seen more and more people come to my clinic complaining of interstitial cystitis (let's call it 'IC'). Many of them were referred by friends with IC who have had a good response from acupuncture and herbs. Some of them were referred by their doctors. More than 700,000 Americans are estimated to have IC, and 90% of these are women.



So what is IC? That's a simple question, but the answer is difficult, because not much is known about the disease from a scientific point of view. Even describing it can be difficult, because people have different experiences with IC. Their symptoms can vary a lot. The most common symptoms are urgent and frequent urination, discomfort, and a feeling of pressure in the lower abdominal area. There can also be intense pain in the bladder, even in the whole pelvic area. Women with IC often experience with pain during sexual intercourse.

Although there are a group of symptoms which can be called IC, there is no definitive test to identify IC, and the cause of the disease is unknown. Some scientists think that it may be an auto-immune response triggered by a bladder infection, or that it may have multiple causes. Because of this uncertainty, it often happens that a woman will suffer with IC for a long time, and never be diagnosed. After tests rule out urinary tract infections, or structural abnormalities of the pelvis, some women are told that it is just something in their mind and put on antidepressants. People with IC are often frustrated because they don't get support from health professionals or from their family. And even if they finally are diagnosed with IC, they will be told by their doctor that there is no cure for it.

Can acupuncture and Chinese herbs help with IC? Let's look at Nikki's case. When she first began to have problems, Nikki was a 35-year-old school nurse with two young children. She had a happy family and a career which she really liked, even though it required a lot of driving from one school to another. The first symptom was a 'bladder infection' which was treated with antibiotics by her doctor. Initially, she thought her bladder pain and urgency were better, and the antibiotics seemed to be working. But gradually her symptoms got worse again, and would not respond to the antibiotics at all. After more than one year of struggling with her symptoms, and having multiple tests from multiple specialists, Nikki was told that she had IC.

Nikki was finally referred to my clinic by her doctor. She had been dealing with her IC for almost three years, and could not continue to work any more. She had tried conventional treatments including bladder distention, bladder instillation, and oral drugs, but nothing really helped in the long run. During her initial visit with me, she complained about pain in the pelvic area, burning urination, frequency, and urgency. At the beginning it was very hard for

her to come for acupuncture treatments. It took her 45 minutes to drive to my clinic from her home. She told me that she knew all the fast food restaurants along her way, because she needed to go to the restroom every 10-15 minutes. She had to stop at MacDonald's, Burger King, and Pizza Hut to get to my clinic. Even during the acupuncture treatments at the beginning, I would just finish putting in needles, and she would need to run to the bathroom, so I would have to take the needles out again quickly. Her energy levels were so bad, she could not wait even one minute. She also worried about her relationship with her husband, because every time after they had intercourse, the intense pain and burning sensation she experienced were so hard for her to handle that she had to put ice cubes into her vaginal area.

Fortunately, Nikki responded to acupuncture and Chinese herbs really fast. After a few weeks of treatment, her pain was noticeably reduced. After another three months, she reported that 80% of her symptoms had disappeared. I continued to see Nikki for about a year, spacing out her treatments as she improved. An important part of her treatment was to follow a good diet pattern. I suggested that she avoid hot spices, caffeinated and citrus beverages, tomatoes, and alcohol.

That was five years ago. Nikki resumed her job and got back all the parts of her life that IC took away. Now I see her once in a while when she comes in for a tune-up. She has been doing really well.

Not all patients with IC have the same response as Nikki, especially long term and chronic cases. Some of them have so much scar tissue on their bladder wall that a cure becomes very difficult. But acupuncture and Chinese herbs can still help to relieve discomfort and reduce pain, and improve their quality of life.

If you saw a traditional Chinese medicine practitioner, he or she would evaluate you based on your primary complaint, health history, general constitution, clinical symptoms, and pulse and tongue diagnosis. Although traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) classifies IC as 'Lin Syndrome,' most patients have more than one imbalance, and different individuals will manifest Lin Syndrome in different ways. TCM practitioners must be skillful in distinguishing the correct TCM pattern in order to select the most effective acupuncture points and herbal formulas.

TREATING IRREGULAR PERIODS WITH CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINE

Today's women spend over one third of their lifetimes with menstrual cycles. Regular and healthy periods are what every woman seeks. In response to this perennial concern of women, gynecology and obstetrics comprise over a third of the theory and practice of traditional Chinese medicine.



Joan is a 31-year-old single mother. Her menses began at age thirteen, and she had irregular periods until she was sixteen. Recently, for eight months, her periods began to come early, eight to ten days before the expected time. She experienced heavy bleeding, with a sticky, purplish flow, clots and abdominal pain. Ten prescriptions of *Clear Menses*

Formula with slight variations and acupuncture treatments returned Joan to normal.

Menstrual disorders are varied: olyomenorrhea, polymenorrhea, menorrhagia, metrorrhagia, hypomenorrhea, amenorrhea, dysmenorrhea, menopause, premenstrual syndrome, breast distention, headache, mood swings, fever, diarrhea, vomiting blood, edema, dizziness during menstruation and other symptoms with menstrual cycles are common among women across cultures, across countries and across time.

What is causing my menstrual irregularities and imbalances asks the woman who suffers. Chinese medicine theory has several answers to this question, the most important of which are: emotions, diet; and imbalance or blockage of the internal organs (Zang Fu) and internal energy pathways (meridians). Each of the major internal organs is affected by a specific emotion, and each organ also controls one or more of the energy meridians. For example, the Liver is strongly affected by anger, and the Liver meridian encircles the reproductive organs. The Liver is responsible for the smooth flow of emotions and Blood in our bodies. When there is excessive anger, especially unexpressed anger, the proper functioning of the Liver is damaged. and many problems, including menstrual disorders, eating disorders, and depression can result. Worrying and excessive thinking can impair the proper functioning of the Spleen, which generates the energy (Chi) and Blood that nourish our reproductive organs. Fear is the big killer for our kidney meridian, which contains our vital essence. Vital essence is very damaging to the Kidneys, which holds our vital essence and genetic makeup. Disharmony of Kidneys, Spleen and Liver is therefore one of the key factors in menstrual dysfunction.

Unhealthy diet choices also strongly affect the reproductive system. Over-consumption of cold, raw foods and icy drinks can decrease energy flow, drain energy from the system, and over time will cause the painful blockage of energy flow and the accumulation of cold in the body. Eating a lot of hot and spicy foods, such as red meat, chocolate, coffee, fried foods, hot spices can overheat the Blood and cause the accumulation of Heat in the body. Unregulated emotions also contribute to Heat accumulation. When you look at our eating habits and stress levels in this country, it is easy to understand the prevalence of Heat and Cold pattern menstrual disorders.

In traditional Chinese medicine, the specific details of the menstrual cycle - duration, volume, appearance of flow, etc. - are only the surface phenomena. The underlying causes of menstrual disorders are dysfunction of the internal organs; disharmony of Chi, Blood and Body Fluids; imbalance of the Conception and Governing meridians; and irregularity of Kidney Essence.

In any type of menstrual disorder, blood is critical. For regulating the menstrual cycle, regulating blood is always necessary. Angelica, peony and rehmannia are medicinal plants which nourish the Blood and regulate the menstrual cycle. Angelica tops the list for gynecological problems. The "female ginseng" can tonify the female reproductive system, relieve menstrual pain, regulate the menstrual cycle, reduce premenstrual syndrome and relieve many symptoms of menopause. A research project on Angelica is under way at the University of California at Berkeley.

The following three patterns of menstrual disorders are very common have been emphasized by Chinese medicine practitioners for hundreds of years.

Disharmony of Liver, Spleen, and Kidneys

This pattern includes irregular periods, dysmenorrhea. Also indicated are potential profuse bleeding and amenorrhea. This pattern is always connected to emotions. *Stable Menses Formula (Ding Jing Tang)* is the main prescription for this type of menstrual disorders.

Stable Menses Formula (Ding Jing Tang)

Buplerum (Chai Hu)
Schizonepeta (Jing Jie)
Angelica (Dang Gui)
Peony (Bai Shao)
Yam Root (Shan Yao)
Poria (Fu Ling)
Dodder Seed (Tu Si Zi)
Rehmannia (Shu Di)

This formula was prescribed by Dr. Fu Qingzhu in his famous book, *Fu Qingzhu's Gynecology*, written in 1827. This is one of the most important gynecological textbooks in traditional Chinese medicine. His formulas are still the standard in the modern textbooks. In this formula, buplerum and schizonepeta soothe the Liver, yam root and poria strengthen the Spleen, dodder seed and rehmannia tonify the Kidneys. All these herbs help angelica and peony to "soften and comfort" the Liver, nourish the Blood and regulate the menstruation. It is a well-balanced formula.

Excessive Heat Pattern

This pattern includes early periods, heavy menstruation, profuse bleeding, dysmenorrhea with symptoms such as anxiety, feverish feeling, dry mouth, purple clots in menses, breast distention, hypochondriac pain or abdominal distention, aversion to heat or warmth. *Clear Menses Formula (Qing Jing Tang)* is the main prescription for menstrual disorders of Excessive Heat Type. This formula was also prescribed by Dr. Fu Qingzhu in his *Fu Qingzhu's Gynecology*. In this formula, peony root, wormwood and phellodendri clear the Heat; Rehmannia and wolfberry root clear the Heat and cool the Blood; Poria moves the Fluid. Although this formula is to clear the Heat, rehmannia and peony help to protect the Yin and Essence. It is a time-tested formula.

Clear Menses Formula (Qing Jing Tang)

Peony Root (Dan Pi)
Wolfberry Root (Di Gu Pi)
Peony (Bai Shao)
Rehmannia (Sheng Di)
Wormwood (Qing Hao)
Phellodendri (Huang Bai)
Poria (Fu Ling)

Excessive Cold Pattern

This pattern includes scanty periods (oligomenorrhea), delayed periods, amenorrhea, or dysmenorrhea. Main symptoms include blood stasis with periods, cold limbs, abdominal pain with periods, and aversion to cold. *Warm Menses Formula (Wen Jing Tang)* is the main prescription for menstrual disorders of the Cold Type. This formula was prescribed by Dr. Chen Ziming in his book, *Fine Prescriptions for Women*, written in 1237 during Song Dynasty. Cinnamon warms the menses and uterus; Angelica and Cnidium correct the menstrual irregularity from stagnated Blood; congealed Blood or deficient Blood; Ginseng tonifies the Qi and assists the other three herbs. Zedoary, Peony Root and Achyranthis promote Blood circulation and eliminate stasis; Licorice harmonizes. This is a representative formula in traditional Chinese medicine wisdom.

Traditional Chinese medicine has accumulated tremendous experience in dealing with women's health problems. TCM gynecology was developed among the earliest. It pays a lot of attention to very subtle aspects of women's health. Different patterns, different stages, even many symptoms not differentiated by conventional medicine are detailed in the huge volumes of medical literature and records of clinical experience.

Warm Menses Formula (Wen Jing Tang)

Ginseng (Renshen)
Angelica (Dang Gui)
Cnidium (Chuan Qiong)
Peony (Bai Shao)
Cinnamon (Gui Xin)
Zedoary (E Zhu)
Peony Root (Dan Pi)
Achyranthis (Niu Xi)
Licorice (Gan Cao)

IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME AND CHINESE MEDICINE

At least fifteen percent of the U.S. population is affected by irritable bowel syndrome. It is a very common cause of chronic abdominal and pelvic pain in women. Irritable bowel syndrome



is a term used in all cases of abdominal pain with alternation of diarrhea and constipation for which no structural abnormality can be found. Different names such as irritable colon, unstable colon, spastic colon or nervous colon are given to irritable bowel syndrome. Because irritable bowel syndrome is not an inflammatory process, the names of mucous colitis or nervous colitis for irritable bowel syndrome are not appropriate.

Three typical symptoms are associated with irritable bowel syndrome: abdominal pain, constipation, and diarrhea. Irritable bowel

syndrome is a disorder of the motility of the entire gastrointestinal tract. Irritable bowel syndrome is closely related to intestinal contractions. There are two types of intestinal contractions: segmenting contractions and propulsive contractions. Segmenting contractions keep waste products from moving down toward the rectum and anus, while propulsive contractions force the contents forward. Constipation results from excessive segmenting contractions, while diarrhea results from excessive propulsive contractions. In irritable bowel syndrome, the gastrointestinal tract is very sensitive to many stimuli such as emotional stress, anxiety, depression, diet, alcohol, drugs, and hormones. The treatment of irritable bowel syndrome by conventional medicine can be a distressing and frustrating experience for both patients and doctors. Traditional Chinese medicine can provide an effective alternative approach to treating this syndrome, which is seen as a functional disorder related to emotions and diet.

Irritable Bowel Syndrome in Chinese Medicine

A variety of names are given to both diarrhea and constipation in Chinese medicine. Some names are associated with dysfunction of particular organs, such as Stomach diarrhea, Spleen diarrhea, Large Intestine diarrhea, or Kidney diarrhea. Some names are associated with the cause of the problem, such as food diarrhea, Chi diarrhea, Cold constipation, Heat constipation, Chi constipation, Excess constipation, or Deficiency constipation. From the earliest classics such as the *Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine*, and the *Classic of Difficulties*, both of which were written more than two thousand years ago, to modern medical literature, constipation and diarrhea are seen as conditions which are effectively treated by traditional Chinese medicine. In the traditional medical literature, irritable bowel syndrome is not classified as a disease, *per se*. The specific symptoms that are presented by the patient are differentiated into a particular pattern (e.g. Spleen diarrhea, Cold constipation, etc.) and treated accordingly. This provides a practical and effective way to address this syndrome. So far, in this country, I have treated over one hundred cases of irritable bowel syndrome with acupuncture and herbal medicine. My patients have had excellent results from these ancient healing techniques.

Patterns and Treatments of Irritable Bowel Syndrome

In the following section, five patterns of irritable bowel syndrome are differentiated according to Chinese medical theory. The name of each pattern is based either on the cause of the problem (example: Chi Stagnation), or the internal organs affected (example: Spleen and Liver Disharmony). Diagnosis is based on the individual's symptoms, specifically the nature of his or her abdominal pain, diarrhea, and constipation, plus the readings of the tongue and

pulse. Clinical manifestations, commonly-used herbs and herbal formulas for each pattern are discussed.

- **Disharmony of Spleen and Liver.** This disharmony pattern originates in emotional stress and inappropriate diet. Clinical manifestations include: diarrhea; abdominal pain; constipation; chest congestion; hypochondriac (under the rib cage) pain; noisy belching of gas from the stomach; poor appetite; episodes of diarrhea brought on by anger or emotional stress; thin, mucous tongue coating or pale-red tongue; and a wiry pulse. An essential formula, *Tong Xie Yao Fang*, which includes ledebouriella (fang feng), poria (bai shao), tangerine peel (chen pi), and atracylodes (bai zhu) is the basic formula for this pattern.
- **Deficiency of Spleen and Kidney Yang.** Constitutional weakness, general weakness from aging, chronic illness, or slow recovery from surgery or childbearing are the principal causes of this pattern. Clinical manifestations include: diarrhea; abdominal pain that seems to move around; constipation; relief of pain with bowel movements; cold limbs; sore knees and back; pale tongue; and a deep, thin pulse. Time-tested formulas such as *Si Shen Wan*, which includes psoralea (bu gu zhi), evodia (wu zhu yu), nutmeg (rou dou kou), and schizandra (wu wei zi); and *Fu Zi Li Zhong Tang*, which includes aconite (fu zi), ginseng (ren shen), ginger (gan jiang), licorice (gan cao), and atracylodes (bai zhu) are the basic formulas for this pattern.
- **Spleen Yang Deficiency.** The habitual consumption of cold foods, chronic indigestion, or long-standing exposure to cold temperatures are considered to be the origins of this pattern. Clinical manifestations include: watery diarrhea; abdominal pain that is relieved by heat; difficult bowel movements; rumbling noise in the intestines with abdominal pain; chest congestion; poor appetite; aversion to cold; cold limbs; tongue coated with whitish mucus; and a slow, "soggy" pulse. Formulas such as *GI Strength* (Xiang Sha Liu Jun Zi Tang), which includes ginseng (ren shen), atracylodes (bai zhu), poria (fu ling), licorice (gan cao), Tangerine peel (chen pi), pinella (ban xia), amomum (sha ren), and saussurea (mu xiang); and *Wen Pi Tang*, which includes aconite (fu zi), ginger (gan jiang), codonopsis (dan shen), rhubarb (dai huang), and licorice (gan cao), are classical herbal combinations for this pattern.
- **Damp Heat in the Middle Burner.** The most common precipitators of this pattern are the habitual consumption of hot, spicy, or greasy foods, and/or chronic infections. Clinical manifestations include: diarrhea; abdominal pain with bloating; constipation with dry, hard stools; urgent diarrhea; diarrhea with abdominal pain; burning sensation of the anus; darker, foul-smelling stools and urine; dry mouth with bad breath; yellow tongue coating; and a rapid pulse that feels "soggy" or "slippery." Formulas such as *Ge Gan Qin Lian Tang*, which includes kudzu (ge gan), licorice (gan cao), skullcap (huang qin), and coptis (huang lian); and *Ma Zi Ren Wan*, which includes cannabis (ma zi ren), red peony (shao yao), aurantium (zhi shi), rhubarb (dai huang), magnolia (hou bu), and armenica (xing ren) are commonly-used prescriptions for this condition.

- **Chi Stagnation and Blood Stasis.** Emotional trauma or internal injury is considered to be the origins of this pattern. Clinical manifestations include: diarrhea; sharp abdominal pains that seem to move around; constipation; anxiety; chest congestion; aversion to pressure in hypochondriac areas; sharp hypochondriac pain; purple-appearing tongue; and a choppy pulse. *Ge Xia Zhu Yu Tang*, which includes bat dung (wu ling zhi), angelica (dang gui), cnidium (chuan qiong), persica seed (tao ren), peony bark (dan pi), red peony (chi shao), linden (wu yao), corydalis (yan hu), licorice (gan cao), cyperus (xiang fu), safflower (hong hua), and aurantium (zhi ke) is a leading herbal formula for this combined pattern of irritable bowel syndrome.

ACUPUNCTURE FOR LOW BACK PAIN

Low back pain is probably the commonest health problem in the United States, and it is also one of the most common reasons for a medical doctor to refer a patient to an acupuncture clinic.



Low back pain is very common. It can be acute, lasting less than one month, or chronic, lasting beyond three months.

ADAM

Because acupuncture is relatively new in this country, there have not been many scientific studies done here on the general effectiveness of acupuncture. Studies sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) have been done in the areas of pain control, drug detoxification, and nausea reduction, and have shown acupuncture to be a safe and effective treatment modality for those problems. There are many more studies from Asia and Europe that support the use of acupuncture and Chinese medicine for a variety of health conditions.

The reason American doctors are more and more willing to refer their patients to acupuncturists for pain-related and neurological problems is because of the NIH studies, and because their patients report that acupuncture has a high success rate.

In my experience, acupuncture not only reduces pain, it also promotes the healing process by bringing a stronger flow of blood and energy (Chi) to the affected area. Because acupuncture can affect the release of endorphins in the brain, people often find that acupuncture treatments reduce stress and produce a feeling of well-being, in addition to controlling their pain.

Most people probably think that back pain is back pain, but it is important to distinguish between acute low back pain and chronic low back pain. Type of treatment, length of treatment, and treatment outcomes will vary, depending on which kind of back pain you have.

Acute low back pain: If you have just injured yourself, and come in to have an acupuncture treatment right away, you will usually see immediate results. Recently I saw a young man who had injured himself two days before when he tried to lift a heavy couch. He had never experienced back trouble previously. His pain was so bad that he could hardly get out of bed, or even go to the bathroom. He needed assistance to get up on the treatment table and to take his shoes off. After the acupuncture treatment he immediately felt much better, got off the treatment table by himself, and could bend over to put his shoes back on. Within the week he had two more treatments, and totally recovered. Patients are quite often amazed at how quickly they improve with treatment, and tell me, 'It's like a miracle.' The good news about acute low back pain is that you really do not need many treatments in order to have a satisfactory result. The bad news is that we hardly ever see acute cases. Generally, by the time people decide to try acupuncture they have already tried everything else they could think of, and acupuncture is the last resort.

Chronic low back pain is a different story because it takes more time and more intensive treatment to alleviate pain and promote healing. Last week I saw a gentleman who was very optimistic when he came in. He had been referred to the clinic by a friend who had totally recovered from acute back pain after only one acupuncture treatment, and he was expecting the same kind of results. When I asked him how long he had been having back trouble, he told me fifteen years. I was sorry to have to tell him that he was not going to have the same miracle cure as his friend. When a health problem has become entrenched over time, it takes more time to bring it under control. Generally, the longer you have had something, or the more serious it is, the longer it will take to fix it. With chronic conditions, acupuncture treatments have a cumulative effect, building on each other over time. The good part is that you can usually see positive change after several weeks of treatment. I'm not saying that the

condition is cured in a few weeks, but you can tell that you are responding to treatment, and that your symptoms are improving. Some people feel better after 4-5 acupuncture treatments, and some of them need 7-8 treatments before they feel better.

Let's say that you have severe back pain. Your doctor says you have at least two herniated discs, and you are scheduled for surgery in a month. At this stage, is there any point in trying acupuncture? I had a case several months ago that shows how helpful acupuncture can be. A woman was referred to my clinic by her doctor for pain control while she was waiting for surgery, which was scheduled in twenty days. Her husband brought her in, because she was in too much pain to drive. After having about eight acupuncture treatments, she returned to her doctor for a pre-operative check-up. Her pain had been reduced considerably, and her mobility and range of motion were much improved. The doctor was surprised to see how much better she was. After a thorough examination, he decided to cancel the surgery and let her continue with acupuncture treatments for another month. She continued to improve, even flying to England to deliver a lecture. I am not saying that acupuncture is a substitute for surgery. Some people will need to have an operation to relieve severe back conditions. But most people who try acupuncture will experience improvement in pain levels and mobility, and some of them may be able to avoid surgery.

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) has several effective modalities for treating low back pain. The most common modality is acupuncture, which is highly effective for both acute and chronic low back pain. Acupuncture is often combined with electro-stimulation, where a machine that produces a mild electric current is attached to the acupuncture needles with clips. The frequency and intensity of the electric current depend on the condition of the patient. Moxibustion is a TCM practice that goes back hundreds of years. A particular plant of the artemesia family is processed into a concentrated form, and then it is burned, something like a stick of incense. It can be applied to the handle of an acupuncture needle, or just held above the surface of the skin, and it has a deeply warming effect.

Chinese herbs and herbal formulas are also a very important TCM modality. In China, all of the chronic low back patients are treated with herbal formulas and acupuncture, and even the acute low back patients will often get an herbal prescription. Herbs are important because they have a very strong effect to correct internal imbalances. The reason herbs are given to chronic low back pain patients is because this kind of pain is seen as a symptom of a deeper internal imbalance. A number of TCM patterns such as Kidney deficiency, Chi or Yang deficiency, Cold Accumulation, meridian obstruction, and others will have chronic low back pain as a symptom. Ideally, acupuncture, herbs, moxibustion, and dietary modifications would be used in combination, as needed, to open blocked meridians, promote the flow of Chi and blood, and tonify the deficiencies and degeneration that can come with age and stress.

TRADITIONAL CHINESE MEDICINE FOR MENOPAUSE

It is a daily occurrence in my clinic for women to ask me about menopause-related health issues. They wonder whether they should take hormone replacement therapy, and what the long-term effects might be. They ask how women in Asian countries deal with menopause, and if there are natural, safe alternatives to artificial hormone replacement.



For Chinese women, hot flashes and night sweats are uncommon experiences, and very few of them are ever put on hormone replacement therapy by their doctors. It is an interesting fact that only 10% of Asian women experience noticeable menopausal symptoms, compared with 75% of the women in the United States. Why has this natural transitional period in a woman's life become

a dreaded event for American women? What explains the difference between the typical Chinese woman's experience of menopause and the typical American woman's experience? These are important questions for women to ask, and for health care professionals to answer.

Based on my study and observations, I would say that it is a combination of diet, acupuncture, and Chinese herbal medicine that is the determining factor in maintaining the health of Asian women through menopause.

Dietary Therapy

The use of food as medicine is a basic idea in Chinese culture, and a fundamental principle in traditional Chinese medicine. Most people who have seriously studied the effect of diet on health are prepared to say that more than 75% of health problems are related to diet. Just consider that the three leading causes of death in this country -- heart attack, cancer, and stroke -- are all closely correlated with poor diet. For a Chinese medicine practitioner, evaluating the patient's diet is a fundamental part of the diagnostic and treatment process. The deficiencies and imbalances that a patient has are taken into account, and recommendations are made regarding what foods to eat and what foods to avoid.

Some of the most interesting research for those concerned with women's health issues has been done in the field of plant chemistry, and specifically in studies of chemicals called phytoestrogens. Phytoestrogens are chemicals produced by certain plants which resemble the estrogens that are produced by the human body, and which bind readily to estrogen receptors in the human body, but which are "weaker" forms of estrogen than human estrogen. Scientific studies suggest that higher levels of "strong" estrogen correlate with higher incidence of breast cancer in women. That is why women with a history of breast cancer, or a high risk of developing it are not recommended to be on hormone replacement therapy. Unfortunately, women in Western countries are exposed to higher levels of environmental estrogen than women in undeveloped countries. It is estimated that our environment adds 40% more "strong" (and harmful) estrogens to the body than are produced naturally. This could explain why the incidence of breast cancer is higher in developed countries, and is probably a complicating factor in many hormone-related conditions. The benefit of eating foods which are high in phytoestrogens, like soy beans, is that the "weak" estrogen of the plant binds to the body's estrogen receptors, displacing the "strong" estrogens, which are then discharged harmlessly from the body.

Studies indicate that a diet rich in phytoestrogens can reduce the adverse symptoms associated with menopause. The phytoestrogens that are bound to the body's estrogen receptors release slowly and naturally into the blood stream, providing a continuing source of estrogen as the body's naturally-produced estrogen supply diminishes. As long as phytoestrogens are replenished by eating phytoestrogen-rich foods, there will be a safe, natural supply of estrogen to cushion a woman through the process of menopause and into her post-menopausal years. One study suggests that a diet high in soy could increase the number of cells in the vaginal epithelium, which would prevent the thinning of the vaginal wall. Although soy has never been a popular food in the United States, it is the richest source of phytoestrogens known, and it forms a major part of the typical Asian diet. Soy beans and soy food products like soymilk and tofu are eaten at every meal. The average Asian woman eats 50-60 grams of soy per day, compared with less than five grams eaten by an American woman. It is never too late to change over to a healthier way of eating, but it is true that soy foods have to be eaten in large quantities over a long period of time in order to receive the full benefit. A woman who wants a trouble-free menopause should begin to eat soy in her twenties or thirties. Included below is a recipe for a typical Chinese meal which utilizes tofu and other healthy vegetables.

For those women who are already experiencing the distress of hot flashes, night sweats, headaches, and insomnia, acupuncture and Chinese herbal formulas can provide a safe and effective way to achieve a trouble-free menopause.

A Recipe: Tofu-Shiitake Stir-Fry

Chop finely:

- 1" cube fresh ginger
- 2 cloves fresh garlic

Blend with:

- 2 tbsp. soy sauce

Pour this over:

- 1/2 lb. firm tofu, cut in 1/2" cubes (increase tofu to taste)

Let this marinate while preparing vegetables below:

- 1 red bell pepper, cut in triangles
- 3 - 4 fresh shiitake mushrooms, sliced (3 -5 dried)
- 1/2 cup snow peas

Heat a wok with 1 Tbsp. oil

Add peppers, stir-fry one minute. Add mushrooms and snow peas, stir-fry one minute. Add the tofu and marinade. Stir-fry one minute, then cover and steam until hot.

Serve over brown rice.

Acupuncture

To achieve the most effective level of treatment, acupuncture is combined with Chinese herbal medicine. There are very few women who don't respond well to acupuncture treatments. Many feel an improvement after just a few sessions. A good example is Sue, a 53 year old school teacher who came to my clinic this summer. She began menopause early, at age 43, and was put on hormone replacement therapy by her doctor. Then she developed breast cancer and went through a mastectomy, chemotherapy, and radiation therapy. After that, her

doctor wouldn't resume hormone replacement therapy, and Sue's menopausal symptoms became severe. She had daily headaches, night sweats, and hot flashes every twenty minutes. She was unable to sleep through the night, and had to get up to change her sweat-soaked nightgown at least once a night. Her emotions were volatile, and she became irritated or began crying under the slightest stress. When she came to see me, she was in great distress because she felt that it would be impossible for her to resume teaching in September. After her first acupuncture treatment, her hot flashes and sweating decreased noticeably, and she slept through the night for the first time in a year. After a month of bi-weekly treatments, the hot flashes, headaches, and night sweats were gone, and Sue began her teaching year. Now Sue comes in for treatments once or twice a month, to manage stress-related symptoms. I am seeing more women who are referred by their gynecologists for acupuncture. The scientific evidence that corroborates the ancient practices of traditional Chinese medicine is mounting up, giving women who want an alternative to hormone therapy real hope.

Chinese Herbal Medicine

Most women in China are evaluated by a traditional Chinese medicine practitioner well before they reach menopause. In Chinese medicine theory, women with certain deficiencies or imbalances of the body are at risk to develop severe menopausal symptoms in the future. If a practitioner saw a younger woman who showed signs of Kidney Yin Deficiency, for example, he would project that she would be likely to have a difficult time at menopause unless the deficiency was corrected. Many of the most valuable Chinese herbal formulas are designed to be tonics for Chi, Blood, Yang, or Yin, and can be used on a regular basis with no adverse side effects. A woman who displayed symptoms of Yin Deficiency, such as insomnia or heart palpitations, would be recommended to take a Yin tonic formula. The practitioner can tell by the signs which internal organ is most affected by the deficiency, and will recommend a tonic which is formulated specifically for that organ. A time-tested formula for Kidney Yin Deficiency, often given to menopausal and pre-menopausal women is *Kidney Yin Tonic* (Rheumania Six Formula).

Kidney Yin Tonic (Liu Wei Di Huang Wan)

Rehmannia (Shu Di Huang)
Cornus (Shan Zhu Yu)
Dioscorea (Shan Yao)
Alisma (Ze Xie)
Peony Bark (Mu Dan Pi)
Poria (Fu Ling)

Americans have become familiar with certain Chinese tonic herbs such as Dang Kui (angelica sinensis) and ginseng. Dang kui is popularly thought of as a woman's tonic, while ginseng is regarded as a man's tonic, but both of these herbs can help with menopause symptoms. However, even though these herbs are very useful, single herbs are not nearly as strong in their effect as herbal formulas are. There are several herbal formulas which are widely used for relieving menopausal symptoms, and which are extremely effective. Fatigue during menopause, for example, is related to Spleen Chi Deficiency. *Immunenergy* (Shi Quan Da Bu Wan) is a formula that has been used for hundreds of years to nourish the Spleen and its meridian. Hot flashes and night sweats are associated with Kidney deficiency, and are treated with the formula *MenoPeace* (Mai Wei Di Huang Wan), which is related to the Kidney Yin Tonic mentioned above. Chinese herbal formulas can also treat other

menopause-related discomforts such as headache, insomnia and depression. These herbal formulas, which have been tested by women in Asia for hundreds of years,

MenoPeace (Mai Wei Di Huang Wan)

Rehmannia (Shu Di Huang)
Cornus (Shan Zhu Yu)
Dioscorea (Shan Yao)
Alisma (Ze Xie)
Peony Bark (Mu Dan Pi)
Poria (Fu Ling)
Lilyturf (Mai Men Dong)
Schizandra (Wu Wei Zi)

CHINESE MEDICINE FOR MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a chronic, auto-immune disease that destroys the myelin sheath around nerve cells, primarily attacking cells of the brain and spinal cord. Statistics indicate that



this debilitating disease is on the rise, but it is possible that the higher numbers reflect an increased ability to diagnose MS, rather than an actual higher disease rate.

Although more cases of MS are being diagnosed, early signs such as double vision, fatigue and muscle weakness are vague, and could be symptoms of a number of diseases. Unfortunately, even when MS is diagnosed, there is no cure for it. A number of drugs are being used to control or minimize symptoms, but

most are not consistently effective. While conventional Western medicine continues to search for ways to diagnose and treat MS, Chinese medicine can be extremely useful as an alternative method for managing symptoms. In my experience, traditional Chinese medicine can effectively reduce flare-ups, reduce disease progression, and improve quality of life for MS sufferers.

Scientists generally see MS as an auto-immune process, but the triggering mechanisms are unclear. Since MS tends to run in families, it seems there is either a genetic tendency to develop the disease, or a genetic predisposition to be susceptible to the triggering mechanisms that result in the development of MS. People in northern latitudes of Europe and North America are more often affected than those in southern areas, and the disease is almost unheard of in the tropics. Multiple sclerosis is twice as common in women as men, and it has been suggested that hormonal factors predispose women to develop MS.

In this article I present a few of the cases I have seen in my clinic, and discuss the Chinese medicine approach to these cases. My belief that acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine are effective modalities to control the progress and reduce the discomfort of MS is based on the positive results I have experienced with the thirty-plus cases I have seen in recent years.

Stephanie's progressively worsening MS started eight years ago. The initial numbness and weakness of her arms developed into an inability to type letters on a computer keyboard. Her eyes were affected, making the computer keys look as if they were moving around constantly. She had some trouble pronouncing words clearly, and sometimes wrote strange symbols when she meant to write letters or numbers. She couldn't concentrate on more than one thing at a time, and became extremely agitated if her train of thought was interrupted. Fortunately, Stephanie had no pain, but she frequently felt chest congestion and heaviness of the body. Her doctor prescribed the drugs ACTH and Cyclospasmol to control her symptoms, but they were only effective for a short while.

When Stephanie came to me, I evaluated her by taking her history and then looking at her tongue and checking her pulse. Tongue and pulse signs are very important diagnostic tools in Chinese medicine. Her pulse was slippery and rapid, and her tongue was red with a yellow-slimy coating. In traditional Chinese medicine, these signs were classified as a pattern of Phlegm/Dampness Blocking the Meridians. Chinese herbs that open the meridians and counteract damp conditions are commonly used for this pattern. After a course of

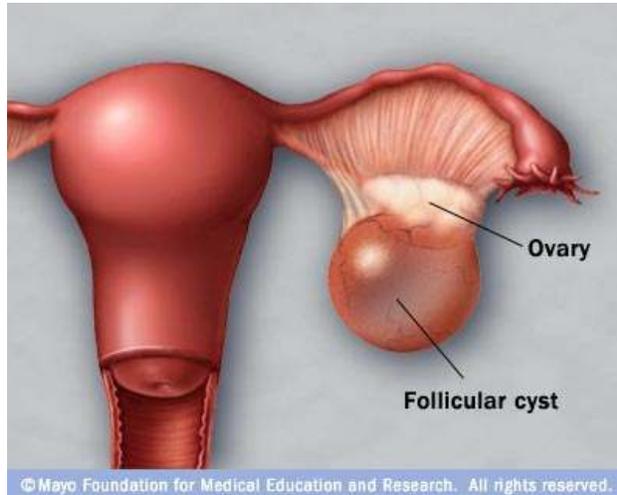
acupuncture treatments with Chinese herbs Stephanie noticed that she types better, and her coordination is improved. She feels that she handles her job better, now, and is happy that she can continue to work.

Steven is a truck driver from northern Minnesota. Six years ago, he began to experience numbness in his arms, hand and leg weakness, and muscle spasms. Loss of coordination and balance, dizziness and fatigue followed. He had localized pain in his left shoulder blade that was sharp and fixed. He was diagnosed with progressive multiple sclerosis. His regular physician prescribed a variety of medications such as oral corticosteroids and interferon, and also suggested that he see an acupuncturist for his pain. When I looked at his tongue, it was purple. In traditional Chinese medicine, his case falls into the category of Blood Stasis in the Meridians. I prescribed a Chinese herbal formula, *StagnationEASE (Xue Fu Zhu Yu Tang)*, and began giving him two acupuncture treatments per week. After a few weeks of treatments, he no longer woke up at night with muscle spasms and pain. Because he can rest well and sleep through the night, Steven feels that he has benefited from Chinese medicine.

Elizabeth had severe and constant numbness on the right side of her body, and difficulties with sight and hearing on that side. She was frustrated by her inability to do daily life tasks, and found it difficult to stand for any period of time or to walk. She came to my clinic in a wheelchair, complaining of leg pain, ankle and back pain. She also experienced slurred speech, blurred and diminished vision, dizziness, ear ringing, forgetfulness, and confusion. She had taken amitriptyline and lorazepam for one year, then switched to Copaxone with no relief of symptoms. When she came to my clinic, her tongue was red and her pulse was thin and rapid. This is a very typical pattern of Kidney/Liver Deficiency in traditional Chinese medicine, and the treatment goal is to nourish her Kidneys and Liver with acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine. A time-tested formula, *Kidney Liver Tonic (Qi Ju Di Huang Wan)*, was suggested to her for long-term use. One day, she came to my clinic and told me, "I can walk all the way down the hallway in my apartment by myself now, and I couldn't do that before."

OVARIAN CYSTS AND CHINESE MEDICINE

Kelly is a 39-year-old librarian. She had been experiencing lower abdominal discomfort with pain and a sense of fullness for about a year when she came to my clinic. An ultrasound



procedure discovered nine cysts in her left ovary and four cysts in her right ovary. Her doctor suggested birth control pills, but the cysts did not respond to this standard therapy. Her next option was surgical removal of the cysts. It was at this point that she looked into alternative medicine and came to my clinic. After three months of acupuncture treatments, Chinese herbal medicine, and dietary changes, all the cysts were gone and her symptoms were under control. She now has follow-up treatments once a month.

Ovarian cysts are an extremely common gynecological problem. It is possible that a majority of women have cysts at some point in their lives and don't know it, because there are usually no clinical symptoms associated with ovarian cysts. Women who do experience symptoms complain of a dull ache in the abdomen, a sense of abdominal pressure or fullness, pain during intercourse, delayed, irregular, or painful menstrual periods, painless swelling of the lower abdomen, or abrupt onset of sharp pain in the lower abdomen.

From a Western point of view, ovarian cysts fall into three categories. Kelly's cysts were functional-type cysts (follicular cysts or corpus luteum cysts) which relate strongly to the menstrual cycle. Follicular cysts occur when the follicle that releases an egg during ovulation does not rupture properly to release the egg. The corpus luteum develops along with the egg, releasing pregnancy hormones if the egg is fertilized, and disappearing if the egg is not fertilized. Corpus luteum cysts occur when the corpus luteum persists abnormally after ovulation. Endometriomas are cysts which form from displaced endometrial tissue. Normally, endometrial tissue lines the walls of the uterus, but in the condition of endometriosis, pieces of tissue migrate to other places in the reproductive system, or even into the abdominal cavity. Wherever endometrial tissue lodges, it continues to respond to the menstrual hormones, enlarging and shrinking and producing blood. In the ovary, the thick, reddish-brown, blood-filled endometriomas are often called "chocolate cysts." The third type of ovarian cyst is a dermoid cyst. Dermoid cysts tend to be firm and self-contained, and are composed of tissue which is usually found in other parts of the body such as skin, hair, or teeth. Functional cysts respond very well to acupuncture and Chinese herbs. Endometrial cysts will generally respond to the Chinese medicine approach to endometriosis. Dermoid cysts need to be surgically removed if they are troublesome.

In traditional Chinese medicine, ovarian cysts are considered to be a product of three main pathological factors: phlegm, dampness, and blood stasis. Each of these factors takes time to develop. Phlegm and dampness are due to an imbalance of the Spleen's energy. The Spleen is responsible for transforming the food that we eat into energy (Chi) and blood. When the Spleen's own energy is deficient, it begins to lose its ability to produce sufficient amounts of Chi and blood. Over time, people with a pattern of Spleen Chi Deficiency do not receive proper nourishment from their food and become fatigued, with digestive problems and a tendency to gain weight and retain water. Excess dampness in the system gradually coalesces into phlegm, which can manifest as lumps and masses of various kinds, including ovarian cysts. Obviously, diet is the key to maintaining good Spleen health. Cold and raw foods and

beverages are hard on the Spleen because it has to expend precious energy "cooking" these foods inside the body and bringing them up to body temperature. It is better to drink room-temperature or warm liquids, and to cook vegetables lightly before eating. The habitual over-consumption of greasy, fatty foods, sweets, and alcohol are very damaging to the Spleen and lead to many health problems besides ovarian cysts.

The third major pathological factor in the Chinese medicine interpretation of ovarian cysts is blood stasis. This means that blood is not flowing along its normal pathways easily and smoothly, and has in fact come to a standstill. A condition of blood stasis factors into many gynecological problems such as PMS and infertility, and is also the basis of many coronary problems. When Chi and/or blood slow down and begin to accumulate in an area, it is called Chi stagnation or blood stagnation. Stagnation always produces pain as a side effect. Blood stasis is an extreme form of blood stagnation which generally takes a while to develop, and which always begins with Chi stagnation. As the Spleen is the key organ in the development of dampness and phlegm, the Liver is the key organ in patterns of blood stasis. The Liver is responsible for "storing" blood and regulating menstruation, and it is also responsible for regulating the flow of emotion in our bodies. Anger is the principal emotion associated with the Liver. Unexpressed or inappropriately expressed anger is the primary cause of the Liver Chi Stagnation pattern that can lead ultimately to blood stasis.

Anne Marie is a good example of Liver Chi stagnation and blood stasis. She had a long history of ovarian cysts when I began to treat her. Gradually, we reduced and eliminated the cysts with acupuncture and herbs. Then, she was forced to go back to school and re-train extensively in order to keep her job three years ago. With the stress of this situation her ovarian cysts returned rapidly. I did intensive treatments including acupuncture and Chinese herbs for her. She is good now. She comes in regularly for reducing her stress level and preventing recurring. Although a blood stasis condition is slow to develop initially, once it is entrenched it can recur easily when it is triggered and aggravated by factors leading to Liver Chi Stagnation.

ACUPUNCTURE: NATURAL, SAFE AND EFFECTIVE HEALING METHOD FOR PAIN

At some point in life, everyone experiences pain: headache, joint pain, low back pain, neck pain, TMJ, etc. Pain is the most common complaint physicians see in their practices. Besides



experiencing pain, most of us have also taken a wide range of pain medications, from over-the-counter medicine like aspirin to stronger prescription drugs; and we are aware (as our doctors are) that these medications can have unpleasant and unwanted side effects. Would so many of us continue to take these synthetic Western drugs if we knew about other options that are time-tested, safe, natural and effective?

When I practiced medicine in China, we did not use many modern synthetic pain pills. Very rarely did I prescribe such pain medications for my patients. Whether a Chinese doctor has trained primarily in Western or Eastern medicine, acupuncture and patent herbal medicine are seen as the first treatment option for pain. Traditional Chinese medicine is a safe, effective and natural healing modality that has been used by a quarter of the world's population continuously for four thousand years to deal with a variety of pain issues.

Although Chinese medicine had long been available in Asian-American communities, broader awareness of acupuncture came to the United States in 1972, when *New York Times* journalist James Reston went on a ground-breaking trip to China with the Nixon entourage. Once there, he suffered a severe appendicitis attack and underwent emergency surgery. During his post-operative recovery, Chinese medical doctors offered acupuncture to relieve his pain and promote healing. Mr. Reston had wonderful results and was so impressed by this ancient healing technique that he came back and wrote a front-page article for the *New York Times* entitled, "I saw the past, and it works." Since then, acupuncture has become increasingly popular in the United States, especially for pain-related problems. Before we talk about acupuncture treatment for pain, let us look at how Chinese medicine explains pain.

Ancient Wisdom with Scientific Evidence

Two fundamental concepts of Chinese medicine are involved in the experience of pain: the meridian system (Jing Luo); and the vital energy of the body (Chi) that flows through the meridian system. When the flow of Chi is blocked or stagnant, pain and illness result. Meridians exist at every level of the body. If Chi is blocked at the skin level, you can see bruising or swelling of the tissue. Blockage in the flesh level can produce stiff, sore muscles; Chi stagnation in the joints produces arthritis pain, TMJ pain, neck and back pain, etc. Internal blockages can produce many symptoms and kinds of pain, including headaches, sore throat, chest pain, stomach pain, menstrual pain, sciatic and nerve pain. Acupuncture is the principal treatment modality employed by Chinese medicine practitioners to break up blockages and promote the free flow of Chi through the body. When the affected meridian is correctly identified, and the hair-thin acupuncture needles are inserted into specific points along that meridian, Chi flow is restored to normal. Because meridians connect every part of the body to every other part, you may find that an acupuncturist will insert needles on your feet or hands in order to treat a headache.

Because Chi and meridians are not observable by current scientific methods, researchers in China and the West have conducted numerous studies which document the effects of acupuncture on the endocrine and nervous systems. Research shows that acupuncture stimulates the production of endorphins, which are our natural pain killers. Another proven mechanism is the dramatic increase of the adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH) with acupuncture treatment. Besides endorphins, additional neurotransmitters have been

found in the natural substances whose release is stimulated by acupuncture therapy, such as serotonin, dopamine, epinephrine, norepinephrine and many others. Some studies indicate that transmission of pain signals through the central nervous system may be blocked by acupuncture. Many very well-designed clinical studies on migraine headache, low back pain, arthritis, sports injury, TMJ, and dysmenorrhea have shown significant differences between groups treated with acupuncture and the control groups not given such treatments.

Acupuncture, Effective Treatment for Pain

I have successfully treated thousands of patients for pain since I came to the United States. It is gratifying to see that people get better or are even cured by acupuncture treatments after struggling for many years with their back pain, migraines, joint pain, or whatever. Recently, a gentleman in my clinic said: "I had heard that acupuncture works, but I never expected it to work so well. I was told that I would have to live with my pain for the rest of my life. My family calls me "the pain pill expert" because I know so much about pain meds -- old ones, new ones, I've tried them all. I tried acupuncture as a last resort and am so glad I did." In my practice, I hear this all the time. Most people who come to my clinic for pain relief have a long history of struggling with pain. Many of them are referred to me by their physicians. Dr. Bruce Pomeranz, a neurosurgeon and professor at the University of Toronto, said, "I can't see a better solution to long term chronic pain. There is no question in my mind that acupuncture is safer than surgery or drugs because it stimulates the natural chemical changes of the body."

Acupuncture has become a real alternative for the treatment of pain. It is widely accepted by more and more people for pain reduction. Both ancient wisdom and modern scientific research reveal that acupuncture really works -- it is not just a matter of belief. Many people become convinced of this when they see their cats or dogs get better after having acupuncture treatments.

Experience Acupuncture, Enjoy Its Benefits

Should you try acupuncture for your pain? Yes, I really encourage you to give it a try. For acute pain, you may just need one to a few treatments. For chronic conditions, a course of six to eight treatments is recommended, by which time you should be able to tell what sort of a response you are having to acupuncture. Some people notice relief right away; some need a few more treatments to notice the change. After six sessions, the practitioner typically reviews your case and discusses your progress with you. Chinese medicine is a strongly collaborative effort between the patient and the practitioner - both have to work together to insure the best results. For the commonest health problem in the world - pain - Chinese medicine is an option worth investigating.

SOLVING THE PREMENSTRUAL SYNDROME MYSTERY WITH CHINESE MEDICINE

Many Western-trained doctors are at a loss when it comes to treating PMS. Premenstrual syndrome (PMS) includes a long list of possible symptoms and combinations of symptoms,



and most of these symptoms are subjective - they can't be measured or analyzed under a microscope. Therefore, a lot of doctors think of PMS as a mystery, and a few even dismiss it as an imaginary condition.

Premenstrual syndrome, also called premenstrual tension, affects about one-third to one-half of women between the ages of 30 and 40. The emotional and physical symptoms include distention and pain in the breasts, headache, dizziness or fainting, restlessness, insomnia, a

feeling of distention or pain under the rib cage, restless sleep, fatigue, depression, crying, forgetfulness, confusion, irritability, anxiety, nervous tension, and abdominal bloating. Typically, these symptoms will occur or intensify during the 7 to 14 days prior to menstruation, and last for 5 to 10 days. Most women experience their symptoms before the onset of menstruation, while some experience them during the period. After the period, most women are back to normal. If a woman has these symptoms only infrequently, it is not considered to be PMS □ PMS is recurrent and cyclical with every period.

PMS in Conventional Medicine and Chinese Medicine

Six years ago, one of my patients went to her regular doctor, a family practitioner. She was experiencing headaches, joint pain, breast distention, abdominal distention, numbness of her hands and feet, and increased tendency to catch a cold. These symptoms had appeared regularly, seven to ten days before her period, every month for the past three years. The doctor made all possible examinations. He could not find anything wrong. She said to her doctor, "it might be PMS." "What!" her doctor responded. Then she was back home with an ibuprofen prescription.

Although the term premenstrual syndrome has been used in conventional medicine since 1931, there has been no definitive explanation of the mechanisms involved in PMS, and no "PMS drug" has yet been developed. Conventional medical treatment of PMS is symptom-based, usually prescribing a particular drug for one or two of the most troublesome symptoms, but tending to ignore the whole picture as it is expressed in the individual woman. This tendency to a one-symptom, one-drug connection means that one or two symptoms may be suppressed, but the syndrome is neglected as a whole. Following is a partial list of PMS symptoms, with the drugs that are commonly prescribed to treat each symptom. All of the drugs listed have side effects.

SYMPTOM	DRUG
Irritability, Stress, Nervousness	Buspirone or Alprazolam
Depression	Fluoxetine or Prozac
Breast Discomfort	Bromocriptine (Parlodel)
Fluid Retention & Bloating	Diuretic such as Spironolactone
Premenstrual Pain	Mefenamic (Ponstel)
Joint Pain & Headaches	Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory Drugs
Multiple PMS Symptoms	Progesterone Therapy
Blocked Ovarian Function	Lupron or Synarel

In traditional Chinese medicine, groups of symptoms, or syndromes, are typically classified into patterns that involve the internal organs and/or energy pathways (meridians) of the body. Three organ systems are principally involved in the PMS pathology analysis: Liver, Heart, and Spleen. Chinese medical theory explains the mechanisms involved as follows: emotional disturbances attack or stress the Liver (which is identified with the Wood element). Wood generates Fire, which is the element associated with the Heart. Fluids are exhausted by Heart Fire, which leads to Heart Blood deficiency. The Heart is then too weak to store the Spirit properly. Spleen deficiency generates phlegm and Phlegm Heat harasses the Heart. Working with these Liver/Heart/Spleen mechanisms, Chinese medicine identifies three primary patterns that include all the major PMS symptoms: Liver Qi Stagnation pattern; Heart Blood Deficiency pattern; and Phlegm-Heat Harassment pattern. Many of the typical PMS symptoms occur in all three patterns, but specific symptoms, as well as specific tongue appearances and pulse readings, are used to differentiate the patterns. For example, a thousand years of observation and clinical practice in China have shown that: heavy and early periods are associated with Liver Qi stagnation; scanty and late periods are associated with Heart Blood Deficiency; and heavy vaginal discharge is associated with Phlegm Heat Harassment. Studies show that over 150 physical and behavioral symptoms are associated with PMS. Dozens of these symptoms fit into the Chinese medicine pattern-differentiated model, and have been treated successfully with acupuncture and herbal medicine for a thousand years.

PMS Patterns and Treatments in Chinese Medicine

Acupuncture has been widely and successfully used to treat PMS. The three main patterns of PMS in traditional Chinese medicine are presented below, with their differentiating symptoms and the leading herbs and herbal formulas that are commonly prescribed for each pattern. The herb, angelica (Dang Gui) has been widely used by Chinese and Japanese women for centuries. It is well-known for regulating menstrual cycles, eliminating the discomfort of premenstrual syndrome, and relieving menstrual cramps. Even though angelica is widely prescribed, there are more refined combinations of herbs and acupuncture points that are tailored to each pattern.

Liver Qi Stagnation Pattern

Emotional stress contributes to the Liver Qi Stagnation pattern of PMS. Clinical manifestations include: depression and melancholy before the period; propensity to outbursts of anger; moodiness; irritability; anxiety; a feeling of fullness or congestion in the chest; a feeling of distention or pain under the rib cage; muttering to oneself; headache with anxiety;

heavy, early periods; thin tongue coating; and a wiry pulse. Many of these symptoms increase before the period and return to normal after the period. Buplerum (Chai Hu) is the leading herb to relieve depression and regulate the Liver Qi. *Mood Smooth* (Jia Wei Xiao Yao San) and *Buplerum Formula* (Chai Hu Shu Gan San) are time-tested formulas for this pattern.

Buplerum Formula (Chai Hu Shu Gan San)

Buplerum (Chai Hu)
White Peony (Bai Shao)
Aurantium Fruit (Zhi Ke)
Cnidium (Chuan Qiong)
Cyperus Tuber (Xiang Fu)
Licorice (Gan Cao)
Tangerine Peel (Chen Pi)

Heart Blood Deficiency Pattern

Chronic illness or excessive menstrual blood loss contributes to Heart Blood Deficiency pattern of PMS. Clinical symptoms include: emotional upset with periods; speaking incoherently; sadness; fatigue; sluggishness; heart palpitations; insomnia; poor memory; inert facial expression; dull-pale complexion; scanty and light periods with light red flow; pale tongue body with a white tongue coating; and a thin pulse. Biota seed (Bai Zi Ren) and jujubee (Suan Zao Ren) are two important Heart tonic herbs. *Heart Yin Tonic* (Tian Wan Bu Xin Dan) and *Heart Tonic* (Yang Xin Tang) are classical formulas for nourishing the Heart and calming the Spirit.

Heart Yin Tonic (Tian Wang Bu Xin Dan)

Biota seed (Bai Zi Ren)
Jujubee (Suan Zao Ren)
Asparagus (Tian Dong)
Lilyturf Root (Mai Dong)
Angelica (Dang Gui)
Schizandra (Wu Wei Zi)
Rehmannia (Di Huang)
Ginseng (Ren Shen)
Figwort (Xuan Shen)
Codonopsis (Dan Shen)
Platycodon (Jie Geng)
Polygala (Yuan Zhi)

Phlegm-Heat Harassment Pattern

Habitual consumption of hot, spicy or greasy foods or chronic emotional trauma contributes to the Phlegm-Heat pattern of PMS. Symptoms include: anxiety; headache; insomnia before the period; agitation; incoherent speech; red face, bloodshot eyes; a feeling of oppression in the chest; angry outbursts; poor appetite; constipation; red tongue body with a yellow-sticky tongue coating; and a wiry-slippery-rapid pulse. Again, many of these symptoms intensify before the period and return to normal after the period. *Pinellia tuber* (Ban Xia) is the top herb for resolving phlegm and harmonizing the spleen and stomach. *Bamboo shavings* (Zhu Ru) are the leading herbs for expelling phlegm from the body and alleviating anxiety. *Warming Gallbladder Decoction* (Wen Dan Tang) is a leading herbal combination for this pattern.

Warming Gallbladder Decoction (Wen Dan Tang)

Pinellia Tuber (Ban Xia)
Bamboo Shavings (Zhu Ru)
Aurantium Fruit (Zhi Shi)
Tangerine Peel (Chen Pi)
Licorice (Gan Cao)
Poria (Fu Ling)
Rhubarb (Dai Huang)
Acori Graminei (Chang Pu)
Curcuma (Yu Jin)

CHINESE MEDICINE FOR SEASONAL DISORDERS

Spring is the season of growing and greening. In Chinese medicine, spring is the liver season. The liver should be taken care of, either through nourishing, soothing or cleansing.



Spring is associated many seasonal health disorders.

Q. I am a forty-five years old computer engineer. I suffered from stomach pain five years ago. Spring is the worst season for me. Hiccup and acid regurgitation are frequently experienced. My conventional gastroenterologist made the diagnosis of gastroduodenal ulcer, hypertrophic gastritis with the help of both barium meal and gastroscopy. Acetaminophen and cimetidine

help control the symptoms. But every Spring is the bothering season in the past continuous five years. Is there any way that the Chinese medicine can break this cycle?

A. This is perfect case which can be analyzed and addressed by traditional Chinese medicine. In the Five Element theory of traditional Chinese medicine, the spring season is associated with the Wood element, which governs the liver. The climate for the spring and Wood element is characterized by wind. The Earth element governs the Spleen. Liver balances (controls) the Spleen in the normal situation. The blowing of wind in the spring could over-strengthen the liver. Any imbalance or deficiency of Spleen (Earth) could be attacked (over-acted) by the liver (Wood) in the spring season. A TCM (traditional Chinese medicine) pattern for the case is called Disharmony of Liver and Spleen. Symptoms could be stomach pain, acid regurgitation, stomach distention, and/or diarrhea. Peony root (Shao Yao) and bulplerum (Chai Hu) are leading herbs, and Liver Spleen Harmonizer (Xiao Yao San) is a classical formula to address these conditions.

Q. I am a retired post officer. Starting from the beginning of every spring ten years ago, I felt dizziness and could not control my body, just like sea-sick. How could the Chinese medicine help me?

A. In traditional Chinese medicine, Liver is the organ associated with spring and Wood element. Kidneys are associated with winter and Water element. Kidneys should be well nourished in the winter. Kidneys and Liver are connected with a generation relation. The functioning of liver depends on the sufficiency of Kidney essence. If the Kidneys are malnourished in the winter, the liver will be in the spring season. Symptoms include dizziness, vision blurring, ear ringing, nose bleeding, nausea, vomiting, low appetite. Although they happened to in the spring season associated with the liver, they should be treated with the kidneys (the root cause). Kidney Yin Tonic (Liu Wei Di Huang Wan) is the most widely used Chinese herbal formula to nourish the Kidneys.

Q. After a long winter in Minnesota, everybody is looking for the spring. But for me, the greening and budding of plants and trees always brought me chest congestion, shortness of breathing, sneezing, running nose. I was diagnosed allergic asthma and allergic rhinitis. Decongestant drops, antihistamine drugs and corticosteroid drugs were used every year, but just control the symptoms for a short time. And they are recurrent every spring. I really need help.

A. One of the commonest complaints in the spring season is allergy problems. Pollen-induced allergic rhinitis is seasonal. Tree pollens and grass pollens are most prevalent in the spring. Warm or hot and windy weather affect the sufferers the worst. In traditional Chinese medicine, spring is the liver season. And the liver has the function of coursing. If the liver is not functioning well, it can affect the functioning of spleen and lung. The flowing of the Chi in the body system will be significantly stagnated and misdirected. The disharmonies of liver and spleen, and lung and spleen will follow. Chest congestion, hypochondriac distention, shortness of breathing, stomach swelling, sneezing, running nose, itching eyes, and low appetite are some common symptoms. Chinese medicine treats this case by smoothening the liver, strengthening the spleen and diffusing the lung. We have numerous successful examples in clinical practice.

Q. I had a cough for over ten years. In the past three years, nose bleeding, cough with phlegm, thirsty, dry mouth, eye blurring came with the spring season. I wonder if there are any recommendations from Chinese medicine.

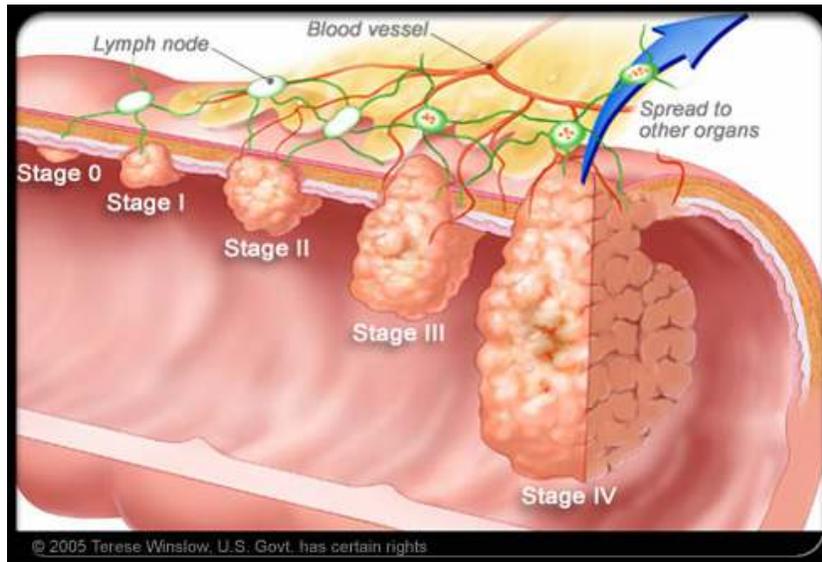
A. In Chinese medicine, there exists a control and balance relationship among the five main organs: liver, lung, spleen, heart and kidneys. The dynamics and stability of the health are maintained by this relationship. Spring is the season of Yang energy rising. Liver Chi is abundant. Your chronic cough might cause deficiency of lung. The overwhelming of the liver Chi in the spring will insult the deficiency of lung Chi. This pattern will be indicated by headache, red eyes, nose bleeding, vomiting bleeding and anger, hypochondriac distention and other symptoms. Cleansing of liver and lung and resuming their balance are necessary from the viewpoint of traditional Chinese medicine. Both acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine can be used for a few courses of treatments.

Q. Any foods are good for the spring season?

A. There are many foods serving the purpose of soothing the liver and cleansing the liver. Greens and leafy vegetables are associated with cleansing and refreshing the body. Dandelion is a very typical spring cleanser. A balanced diet with a variety of juices such as citrus fruits, pear, apple, celery and carrot is very helpful. Remember the balanced diet. Sprouts from seeds such as beans, mung, and radish are valuable for spring use.

REDUCING THE SIDE EFFECTS OF CHEMOTHERAPY WITH CHINESE MEDICINE

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in the US. According to the American Cancer Society, more than one million new cancer cases were expected to be diagnosed in 2000.



Chemotherapy is one of the conventional therapies used to treat cancer. The doses and schedules of chemotherapy drugs are designed so that the drugs will kill the rapidly dividing cancer cells and then be expelled from the patient's body before they can damage most healthy cells (which divide more slowly). However, three types of normal cells also divide rapidly: the cells that make up the interior lining of the intestinal tract, hair producing cells and the bone-marrow cells.

These three normal cells are also affected by the chemotherapy drugs. This causes the three most common side effects: nausea and vomiting, hair loss, and bone-marrow depression. Other side effects include, dry flaky skin, blood clotting, fatigue, infections, depressed immune systems and possible sterility.

Why Chinese Medicine?

Statistics show that almost all cancer patients who are treated with chemotherapy or radiation look for a complementary therapy treatment. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has developed a model of integrating conventional medicine's powerful drugs and instruments to kill cancer cells with a holistic approach to address the side effects. TCM is a pattern differentiation-based functional medicine. Meaning, that a TCM practitioner understands the model of pathological mechanisms, the organs involved (such as the liver, lungs, heart and spleen) and the patterns that are created as a result. For example; Skin-mucous reactions such as dry skin, ulceration, hair loss, local pain, discoloration are caused by toxic heat and exhaustion of body fluids.

By grouping the key and general symptoms of a patient's reactions to chemotherapy, a TCM practitioner makes a diagnosis of pattern defined, such as toxic heat or dampness and treats the pattern accordingly.

TCM Treatment

There are a variety of TCM treatment tools to reduce the side effects of chemotherapy for patients. The most important treatment tools are Chinese herbs and acupuncture. Some herbs often prescribed include astragalus (Huang Qi), Peony (Bai Shao), and honeysuckle (Jin Yin Hua) which are some leading herbs for tonifying qi (or energy), nourishing blood and clearing toxic heat, respectively. However, a professional Chinese medicine practitioner usually prescribes a herbal formula (which is more potent and specific) based on a patient's pattern differentiation. Acupuncture or acupressure on points such as Neiguan (Pericardium 6), which is located two inches above wrist, is very effective for cancer chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting.

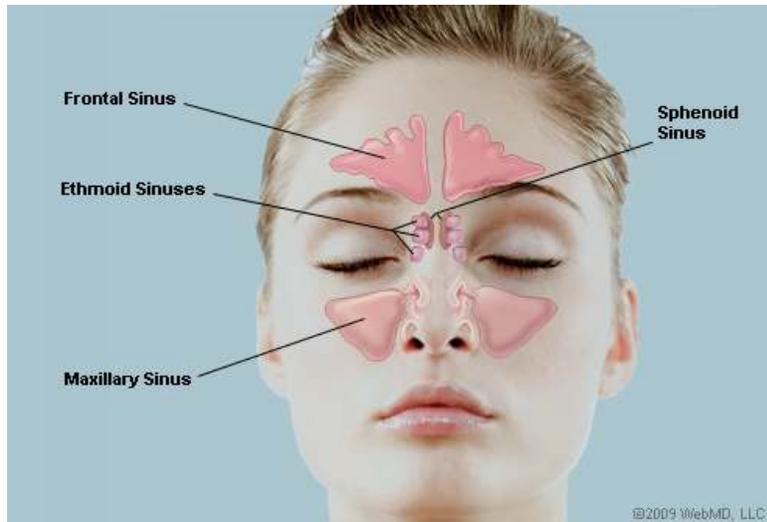
Research Support

A joint study conducted by researchers and medical doctors at the China Academy of Traditional Chinese Medicine, the Beijing Ob/Gyn Hospital, the China-Japan Friendship Hospital and the Beijing Neurosurgery Institute, investigated the regulatory function of acupuncture on the immune system response of patients treated by chemotherapy and radiation therapy. The results of the study showed that acupuncture can strengthen and regulate the immunity of cancer patients, and significantly lessen the side-effects of chemotherapy and radiation therapy. Another study from China showed that moxibustion on the back acupuncture points can significantly increase the white blood counts for cancer patients of middle and late stages.

The National Institute of Health (NIH) assembled a consensus conference to endorse acupuncture in 1997. After analyzing studies and interrogating practitioners, the panel was convinced that acupuncture is clearly effective for nausea and vomiting from chemotherapy and anesthesia.

ACUPUNCTURE AND CHINESE HERBS FOR SINUSITIS

With the coming of winter, many people look forward to skiing and other winter sports, but for those millions of people with chronic or acute sinus problems, winter can be a dreaded event.



Sinus problems affect at least 30 million Americans, and are one of the most common complaints of patients seeking medical attention. Usually, sinus infections start with a cold due to factors such as weather changes; or an allergy episode that causes swelling of the mucous membranes and increased production of watery mucus. When the mucus changes from clear to a yellow or green color, it means a bacterial infection. The mucus builds up and the nasal passages become blocked because the sinus tissues are swollen. One

consequence is the pressure and pain of sinus headaches. Other symptoms of sinusitis include: stuffy nose; sticky-yellow or purulent nasal discharge; nasal congestion; nosebleed; diminished sense of smell; headache; a feeling of heaviness in the head; fever; sore throat; and facial pressure around the cheeks, eyes, and forehead.

In China, people use Chinese herbs and acupuncture for their chronic recurrent sinus infections. Many doctors offer herbs and acupuncture even for acute and severe cases. This use of acupuncture and herbs dramatically decreases the use of antibiotics, thus avoiding the abuse and side effects of antibiotics. It is very valuable for our society to have different options besides antibiotics, especially for the chronic and recurrent infections which conventional Western medicine has failed to cure.

A fifty-one year old lady came to my clinic last November. Every year she suffered from repeated sinus infections, for which she used Bactrim and Amoxil, as well as some decongestants. Steam inhalation helped her a little bit. Her doctor tried his best to mask the signs and symptoms, but when November rolled around, she began her "miserable season" once again. It was at this point that she came to my clinic. Besides some of the typical signs and symptoms, her tongue showed a yellowish coating, and her pulse was rapid. In traditional Chinese medicine, this indicates a Wind-Heat type of sinusitis. Six acupuncture treatments, with a few more follow-ups and an herbal patent medicine, *SinusEASE* (Xin Yi Wan), helped her to have her best winter in six years. In addition to the Wind-Heat type of sinusitis, there are four other patterns of sinusitis in traditional Chinese medicine (see the box below for patterns of sinusitis). These five patterns have different causative factors, and treatment is based on the origin of the pattern.

Patterns of Sinusitis

- Wind-Heat of Lung: mainly caused by weather changes
- Stagnated Heat of Gallbladder: mainly caused by emotions.
- Damp Heat of Spleen/Stomach: mainly caused by greasy and spicy foods.
- Deficiency Cold of Lung Qi: mainly caused by chronic illness.
- Deficiency of Spleen: mainly caused by improper diet, fatigue or over-thinking.

Widely-used herbs for sinusitis include skullcap (huang qin), magnolia (xin yi hua), and cocklebur (cang er zi). huang qin, or baical skullcap root, is traditionally used for clearing Heat from the upper respiratory system, and Damp Heat from the gastrointestinal system. It has an inhibitory effect against bacteria such as *staphylococcus aureus*, *pseudomonas aeruginosa*, and *streptococcus pneumoniae*. Research also found that *staphylococcus aureus* which has become resistant to penicillin will remain sensitive to skullcap. Magnolia (xin yi hua), named "barbarian bud" in Chinese, is a lily-shaped flower with a hairy bud. In traditional Chinese medicine, it enters into the Lung and Stomach energy pathways (meridians), travels to the face, and winds up at the nose. This is why it is such an effective herb to open up nasal obstruction or congestion and to treat sinus problems. Clinical research shows that a decrease in mucus production is caused by applying xin yi hua to the nasal lining. Cang er zi, or cocklebur fruit, is used for any nasal or sinus problems characterized by a thick and viscous discharge. Pharmacological research found that cang er zi has inhibitory effects on bacteria such as *staphylococcus aureus*. Listed below are several effective Chinese herbal patent medicines for sinusitis which are widely used around the world.

For sinus problems, the color of the nasal discharge and the color of the tongue are very important indications for making the correct diagnosis. One type of pattern with white, clear nasal discharge and a white tongue coating is totally different from another pattern with yellow nasal discharge and a yellow tongue coating. Different herbal medicines and acupuncture treatment strategies are used for the acute stage of sinus infection, for chronic sinus infections, and for the prevention of further infections. Incorrect diagnosis, incorrect acupuncture treatment, or incorrect herbal medicine might make things worse, even when using traditional Chinese medicine.

Acupuncture is another important way to deal with sinus problems. Many people cannot breathe properly through their noses. After having needles inserted at certain points, they will open up and feel immediate relief. I have a male patient who came to the clinic one day for his chronic sinus problems. For twenty-five years, he could not smell or breathe through his nose. When he went home after the first treatment, his wife was cooking, and he told her it smelled good. Both of them were surprised that he could smell again, and also that he could breathe well through his nose. One acupuncture point which is highly effective and is used widely for nose congestion is Bitong point, meaning "opening up the nose." I encourage people with sinus problems to massage this point regularly. Other points to combine with Bitong to achieve very satisfactory results are Yingxiang (LI-20), Hegu (LI-4), Quchi (LI-11), Juliao (ST-3), Yangbai (GB-15), and Fenglong (ST40). The last point, Fenglong, is used to eliminate mucus. Two very important points to enhance immunity and build up your own ability to fight off infections are Zusanli (ST-36) and Sanyinjiao (SP-6). To maintain the effect from your acupuncture treatment, or to head off recurring sinus problems, self-acupressure is very beneficial (see the box for self-acupressure points for sinusitis).

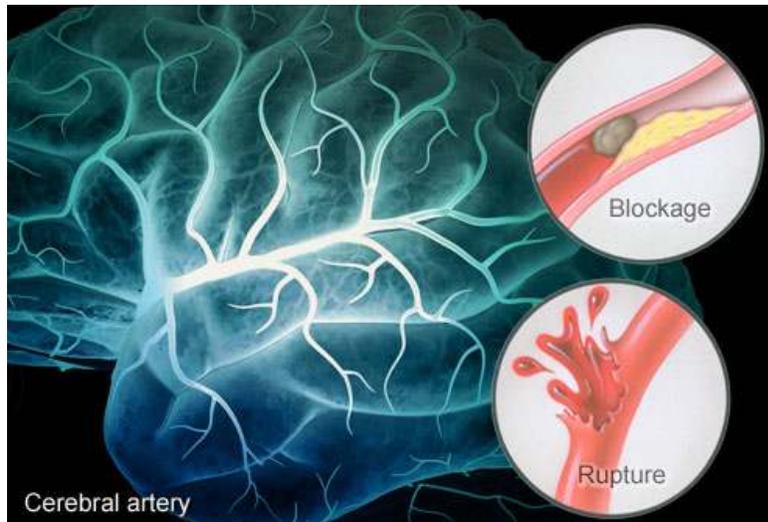
Self-Acupressure Tips for Sinusitis (Do Three Times on Each Point Daily)

- Bitong (Extra Point): Located on each side of the nose, at the bottom edge of the nasal bones.
- Yingxiang (LI 20): Located in the groove on each side of the nostrils, at the widest point of the nostrils.
- Hegu (LI-4): Located at the highest spot of the muscle between the thumb and index finger on the back of the hand when the thumb and index finger are close together.

The dietary approach is another way to deal with sinus problems. A Chinese medicine practitioner always considers the diet to be an important aspect of treatment. Many people have experienced an intensification of their sinus problems after eating certain foods such as cheese, which can have a congesting effect on the system. Generally, you should avoid foods which produce phlegm, such as cheese, ice cream, milk, butter, and fried foods (French fries, fried chicken, etc.). It is also a good idea to limit red meat consumption. Several of the patterns of sinusitis discussed in this article could be avoided through dietary modifications alone.

ACUPUNCTURE: ANCIENT THERAPEUTICS FOR STROKE

Every day, 1200 Americans suffer a stroke, and four hundred of them become permanently disabled. Stroke is the leading cause of disability and the third leading cause of death in the



United States. It is no wonder that being disabled by a stroke is the chief fear of so many elderly Americans. According to a report from the National Institutes of Health in 1992, more than two million Americans suffer long-term disabilities from stroke, at a cost to our society of \$25 billion each year.

In China, there is less incidence of stroke than in Western countries, and greater recovery of function after a stroke. This is not because Chinese people are physically different from

Americans, but because of differences in diet, lifestyle, and post-stroke treatment.

Chinese medicine theory recognizes four main pathological factors (agents) of stroke: Wind, Fire, Phlegm, and Stasis. There are also considered to be four leading contributing factors to stroke, related to lifestyle: emotional stress, overwork, poor diet, and excessive sexual activity.

Because there are a number of contributing factors to stroke, because these contributing factors tend to play out over a long period of time, and because the stroke itself can manifest in a number of ways, it can be difficult to assess the exact cause of a stroke. But remember that strokes don't "just happen" for "no reason." Any of the following lifestyle factors, experienced over a period of years, could eventually result in a stroke: working long hours under stressful conditions without adequate rest; physical overwork, including excessive, strenuous sports activities; emotional strain; irregular eating habits; excessive consumption of fats, dairy products, greasy or fried foods, sugar, or alcohol; excessive sexual activity (what constitutes "excessive" sexual activity depends on the age and general physical condition of the individual).

The internal organs most likely to be weakened by these factors are the Kidney and the Spleen, causing deficiencies of Chi, Blood, and Yin. Deficiencies of Chi, Blood, or Yin permit the body to be overwhelmed by the pathological factors of Wind, Phlegm, Fire, and Stasis, resulting in such stroke-related patterns as Liver Yang Rising, Stasis of Chi or Blood, Phlegm combining with Fire, Liver Wind, or Wind in the Meridians.

Preventing Strokes

Obviously, the most effective way to prevent a stroke from occurring is to modify the lifestyle factors that lead to stroke. Physical work and exercise should be appropriate to a person's age and physical condition, and should be accompanied by adequate rest. The same advice goes for sexual activity. It is important for everyone to learn to manage stress, especially people with a history of cardio-vascular problems. Relaxation, meditation, and gentle exercise like yoga or Tai Chi are proven ways of lowering blood pressure and stress-related chemicals in the body. Perhaps the most important factor is diet. The traditional Chinese diet is high in fiber and low in fat, sugar, and dairy products. It is seen over and over again around the world that populations who eat this type of diet have dramatically lower incidence of heart attack, stroke, and diabetes than populations who eat the typical modern Western diet.

A useful Chinese herb that can help to prevent stroke is ginkgo biloba (bai guo ye). This herb has become phenomenally popular in Europe, with twenty million people taking it regularly. Harvard University's Dr. Elias Corey published his research on ginkgo in 1988 which shows that ginkgo stimulates cerebral circulation (blood flow in the brain). This can not only improve mental functioning, but can prevent blood cells from forming blood clots in the brain. Research indicates that ginkgo improves blood circulation, strengthens mental capacity, lowers plasma cholesterol concentrations, benefits Alzheimer's patients, and can prevent stroke and heart attack. In order to achieve maximum effect, ginkgo should be taken in a therapeutic dose. Because there are no universal pharmacological standards applied to herbal preparations, concentrations of ginkgo may vary from company to company, so it is hard to say what a therapeutic dose is, but 1500 mgm a day would be reasonable for most individuals.

Treating Strokes

Chinese medicine distinguishes two general types of stroke: the most severe type attacks the internal organs as well as the energy pathways (meridians); the milder type attacks only the meridians. In treating the severe type, acupuncture and Chinese herbal formulas are combined with Western drugs to relax spasm, subdue Wind, open the orifices, resolve Phlegm, and lower blood pressure. Patients with the milder type of stroke are treated primarily with acupuncture to open the meridians and promote Chi and Blood flow.

Acupuncture is the most popular treatment modality for stroke patients in China, used effectively on 85% of the stroke patients there. When Margaret Naeser, a neurology professor at Boston University School of Medicine, went to China in the 1980s, she was surprised to see that acupuncture treatments were considered to be the most important part of stroke rehabilitation at Chinese hospitals. She was even more impressed when she saw how effective such treatment was, and began to study acupuncture scientifically when she returned home. Since then, scientific evidence has been accumulating in the West. A controlled study conducted at the Lund University Hospital in Sweden provided several interesting findings. It found that a group of 38 patients who received acupuncture treatments twice a week for ten weeks reported significant improvements in the areas of walking, balance, emotions, quality of life, ease of daily activity, and mobility in comparison with a control group of 40 patients who did not receive acupuncture treatments. The Acupuncture Group spent fewer days in nursing homes and rehabilitation facilities than the Non-Acupuncture Group, with an average savings of \$26,000 per patient. In the follow-up period, it was found that one year after suffering their stroke and receiving treatment, 89% of the patients in the Acupuncture Group were living at home vs. 66% of the patients in the Non-Acupuncture Group.

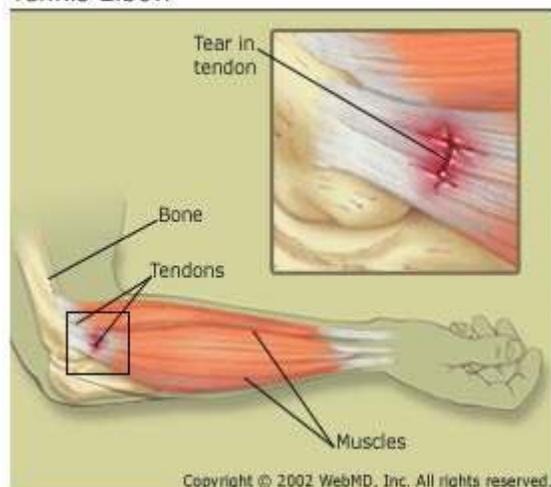
Scientific studies indicate that acupuncture can: facilitate nerve regeneration; decrease blood viscosity; prevent the aggregation of blood cells, dilate blood vessels by triggering the release of hormones; and help surviving nerve cells find new pathways, effectively by-passing damaged parts of the brain. Acupuncture has also been found to be helpful in the treatment of headache, dizziness and hypertension in stroke patients.

Treating stroke patients with acupuncture is one of my specialties. I have treated many stroke patients in both China and the United States, and they typically improve not only in their mobility and strength, but also in their emotional response. As they notice the improvement in their condition, they feel less depressed and are motivated to do their exercises. I can't express how wonderful it is to see people improve and feel hopeful again.

ACUPUNCTURE FOR TENNIS ELBOW

Many of us have experienced a painful elbow from time to time after a golf game, raking the lawn, or a long session on the computer. Usually it clears up after a few days rest. But for a

Tennis Elbow



lot of people, the pain doesn't go away, and they eventually have to go in for treatment. Elbow pain which is due to inflammation of the tendons that attach the lower arm bones to the upper arm is usually called "tennis elbow." It can also be called tendonitis of the elbow, or sometimes "golf elbow."

In this country, doctors recommend an approach that starts with basic care like resting the elbow, avoiding overuse, and wearing a brace. Next, physical therapy, anti-inflammatory drugs, or pain killers are tried. Finally, steroid injections (cortisone shots) may be used in an effort to reduce the inflammation.

In China, acupuncture is the first choice of doctors and their patients in the treatment of tennis elbow.

More radical approaches like surgery or steroid injections are a last resort. In my practice, I often see people who have already tried everything that Western medicine has to offer, including steroid injections, and who still suffer with debilitating pain. One of my patients, Mike, is a good example of this. He had been a tennis coach for fifteen years, and loved his job, but for the last year he had been experiencing severe elbow pain. He tried three steroid injections with no relief. Now he was forced to consider the possibility of giving up tennis for good. Fortunately, acupuncture worked very well for Mike. We started with two treatments a week, and after five weeks, his pain had decreased significantly. Normally, I ask patients to rest their elbow during treatment, but Mike had to continue giving tennis lessons and classes during this time. Even so, he improved to the point where he could continue with the work that he loved.

The effectiveness of acupuncture in treating tennis elbow was the subject of a study done in Sweden by Dr. Gunilla Brattberg. She found that patients treated with acupuncture became much better, or even completely free of pain. None of them got worse or had any side effects from acupuncture treatment. Dr. Brattberg noted that acupuncture is a more time-consuming treatment modality than steroid injection, but while there may be dramatic improvement using steroids, there can also be a worsening of symptoms with steroids. Most acupuncture practitioners find that patients who have had steroid injections are slower to respond to acupuncture treatments than patients who have not been injected.

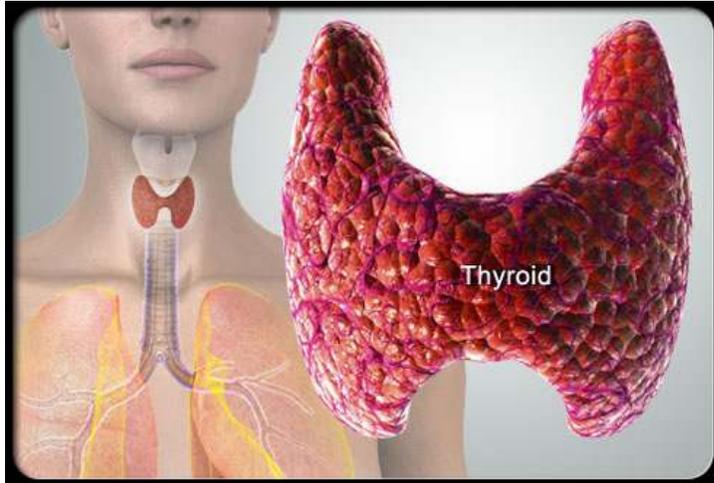
What kind of treatment can you expect at an acupuncture clinic? Exact treatment will vary somewhat from person to person, but most people begin with two acupuncture treatments a week for a few weeks, decreasing the frequency of treatment as the condition improves. The practitioner may also use electrical stimulation, heat lamp, and herbal patches to speed up the healing. Because tennis elbow is the inflammation of a tendon, it usually takes longer to heal than an inflamed muscle would, but you should notice at least some improvement after four or five treatments.

One of my patients asked me an interesting question recently. Samantha is a flight attendant, and has developed severe tennis elbow pain as a result of her job. She said, "I'm pretty sure my elbow problem is from carrying a coffee pot around half the day and lifting heavy luggage. But I've only been a flight attendant for five years. Some of my co-workers have been lifting coffee pots and luggage for twenty years, and they're fine. Is there something wrong with me?"

It does seem like some people are more at risk to develop this problem than others, even if two people are doing the exact same job. Chinese medicine has a unique explanation for this, based on the idea that most health problems are due to an internal imbalance of a fundamental substance of the body, like Chi, Yin, or Yang. In Chinese medicine theory, the Liver controls the tendons. If there is a deficiency of Liver Yin, tendons will not be moistened and nourished enough, and the tendons will dry out and become inflamed. When an acupuncture practitioner treats you, he or she will treat the underlying imbalance as well as the symptoms of pain that you have. Like Mike, Samantha responded to acupuncture very well, and has had no recurrent elbow problems since then.

SAFE AND EFFECTIVE TREATMENTS FOR THYROID DISORDERS

Two years ago a young lady came to my office complaining of tiredness, indigestion, and irregular periods. Her regular doctor, an internist, could not find anything structurally wrong with her. She went to several different practitioners for consultation or treatment.



They treated her without success. Finally, someone suggested that she seek help from Chinese medicine, and she came to me as a "last resort." I took her health history, asked about her life style and eating habits, and looked at her doctors' test results. I also looked at her tongue and read her pulse. Her tongue was very red, with no coating, and her pulse was deep, thin, and rapid. In Chinese medicine terms, these are obvious signs of a severe Yin deficiency. In Western

terms, I followed a treatment strategy for hyperthyroidism. I prescribed acupuncture treatments and an herbal formula, as well as dietary changes. All of her symptoms slowly normalized.

Thyroid problems seem to be more prevalent these days, but this could be because more people are being tested, and the tests themselves are better at detecting irregularities. There are two main thyroid disorders: hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism. Hyperthyroidism is a condition in which the thyroid gland is overactive and produces too much thyroid hormone. Typical symptoms of hyperthyroidism include: high blood pressure; fast heartbeat; moist skin; increased sweating; tremor; nervousness; increased appetite with weight loss; diarrhea and/or frequent bowel movements; weakness; eyes that seem to bulge out of their sockets; and sensitivity of the eyes to light. Hypothyroidism is a condition in which the thyroid gland is under-active and produces too little thyroid hormone. Typical symptoms of hypothyroidism include: hoarse voice; slowed speech; puffy face; drooping eyelids; intolerance of cold conditions; constipation; weight gain; dry hair; and depression.

Thyroid Disorders in Chinese Medicine

In traditional Chinese medicine, both hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism are considered to be a Yin/Yang imbalance. In Chinese philosophical and medical theory, Yin and Yang are the essential components of the material universe. Everything that exists is Yin or Yang (generally a combination of both in a characteristic balance). The Yin principle is dark, moist, receptive, female, sinking, and its electrical charge is negative. The Yang principle is light, fiery, active, male, outward-expanding, and its electrical charge is positive. A very basic principle of Chinese medicine is to keep the Yin and Yang in balance, since the balance of Yin and Yang represents the healthy state of the body. A treatment intervention by traditional Chinese medicine (which includes acupuncture, herbal medicine, and dietary therapy) is designed to bring the Yin and Yang back to a normal balance. In Western terms, an overproduction or underproduction of thyroid hormone alters the body's chemical balance and causes hyper- or hypothyroidism. In Chinese terms, when Yin is deficient it cannot control the Yang energy from escaping outward and upward, and this "reckless" movement of Yang brings about the characteristic symptoms of hyperthyroidism. When Yang is deficient, it simply cannot produce the vital energy necessary to keep the body functioning well, and symptoms of hypothyroidism result.

Recent research, by both Western and Chinese scientists, offers several exciting theories to reinforce ancient ideas about Yin and Yang balance in the body. Bioelectrons are charged particles that exist in living cells and move freely through the body. It has been demonstrated, by measuring electrical resistance on the skin, and by tracking the movement of bioelectrons in the body, that there is decreased electrical resistance at recognized acupuncture points, and that bioelectrons move noticeably along the classic energy pathways (meridians) that carry Qi through the body. External factors (such as diet, weather, and physical injury), and internal factors (such as emotional states, mental stimulation, and hereditary conditions) can all affect bioelectrical movement in the body and cause an imbalance of electrons at a cellular level. This can be interpreted as a Yin/Yang imbalance at the cellular level. Living cells also contain chemical structures called cyclic adenosine monophosphate (cAMP) and cyclic guanosine monophosphate (cGMP). Chinese researchers found that there is a correlation between increased cAMP levels in cell plasma and symptoms of hyperthyroid/Yin Deficiency. There is also a correlation between decreased cAMP/cGMP plasma levels and the symptoms of hypothyroidism/Yang Deficiency. When cAMP and cGMP are in a good balance within the cell, Yin and Yang are balanced at the cellular level, and homeostasis exists in the body's metabolism of thyroid hormone.

Patterns and Treatment of Thyroid Disorders in Chinese Medicine

In the following section, hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism are discussed in terms of their patterns in Chinese medical theory. The leading herbs and herbal formulas for treating each pattern are also given, as well as a few therapeutic recipes.

Hyperthyroidism

Three patterns of Yin Deficiency are differentiated for hyperthyroidism: Kidney Yin Deficiency with Excess Heat; Heart/Liver Yin Deficiency; and Heart/Kidney Yin Deficiency. In the pattern of Kidney Yin Deficiency with Excess Heat, typical symptoms are: enlarged, soft, smooth thyroid; anxiety; anger; aversion to heat; flushed, warm face; dry mouth with a bitter taste; increased appetite; bulging eyes; tremor; increased volume of bowel movements, a red tongue body with a dry, yellow coating; and a wiry, rapid pulse. In the pattern of Yin Deficiency with Heart and Liver Deficiency, the symptoms are: enlarged, swollen, soft, smooth thyroid; heart palpitations; anxiety; insomnia; increased appetite with weight loss; dry throat; a red tongue body with a yellow tongue coating or no coating; and a thin, rapid pulse. In the pattern of Yin Deficiency with Heart and Kidney Deficiency, common symptoms are: enlarged, swollen thyroid; hand tremors; dry mouth and eyes; heart palpitations; increased appetite; irregular period or amenorrhea (for women); impotence or low sex drive (for men); weakness of the knees and lower back; a red tongue body without coating, and a deep, thin, rapid pulse.

Rehmannia (shu di huang), dioscorea (shan yao), and cornus (shan zhu yu) are leading herbs for treating Yin Deficiency. *Kidney Yin Tonic* (Liu Wei Di Huang Wan) is the herbal formula most commonly used for the symptoms of hyperthyroidism. Other herbal formulas, such as *Liver Cleansing* (Zhi Zi Qing Gan Tang) and *Heart Yin Tonic* (Tian Wang Bu Xin Dan) are also used, depending on the specific pattern.

A traditional recipe for dietary therapy of Yin Deficiency is as follows: to three cups of water, add tremella (silver ear fungus), 10g; black fungus (black ear mushroom), 10g; and rock-type sugar, 30g. Cook for one hour. Eat one serving a day.

Hypothyroidism

Two patterns of Yang Deficiency are differentiated for hypothyroidism: Spleen/Kidney Deficiency, and Heart/Kidney Deficiency. In the pattern of Yang Deficiency with Spleen and Kidney Deficiency, the key symptoms are: lassitude; sleepiness; poor memory; dizziness; ringing in the ears (tinnitus); weakness of the lower back and knees; aversion to cold; dry skin; dry hair; constipation; edema; impotence (men); irregular periods (women); pale, puffy tongue body with tooth marks along the edge; white, sticky tongue coating; and a pulse that is deep and thin or deep and slow. In the pattern of Yang Deficiency with Heart and Kidney Deficiency, the characteristic symptoms are: heart palpitations; chest congestion and pain; sleepiness; feeling cold; pale, tender tongue body with a white, slippery coating; and a deep, slow pulse.

Cinnamon (rou gui) and aconite (fu zi) are very useful herbs for treating Yang Deficiency. *Kidney Yang Tonic* (Jin Gui Shen Qi Wan) is the leading herbal formula for treating the symptoms of hypothyroidism. Formulas such as *Right Restoration Formula* (You Gui Wan) are also widely used.

A classical recipe for Yang Deficiency is also very appropriate for hypothyroidism: add pepper, 3g; ginger, 20g; and tangerine peel, 10g to about half a pound of fresh carp. Cook with an appropriate amount of water, and simmer for one hour over a low flame. Eat three servings a week.

TAKING CONTROL OF URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS

Anne is a retired woman who had been plagued by bladder and urethral infections for twenty years. She experienced frequent, painful urination, with incomplete emptying of the bladder and accompanying lower back pain.



All these symptoms got worse when she was fatigued. In 1995, she came to my clinic, TCM Health Center, and was treated with acupuncture and a time-tested herbal formula. After ten treatments her symptoms were under control, and she then continued to use the herbal formula, *UrinClearing* (Zhi Bai Di Huang Wan) to maintain her urinary tract health.

A healthy urinary tract is most desirable, particularly for women who have had a urinary tract

infection and are at risk for developing more infections. Women are affected by urinary tract infections 25 times more often than men. Between the ages of 20 and 50, women are 50 times more likely to get this type of infection. Statistics indicate that up to 90 percent of the women in this country will experience at least one recurring episode of urinary tract infection in their lives.

Urinary Tract Infections: East and West

Based on evidence from ancient medical texts, the treatment of urinary problems challenged Chinese medicine from the earliest times. The *Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine*, written 2300 years ago, explored effective treatments for urinary tract infections (classified as "stranguria"), using acupuncture and herbal treatments that are still in use today. French chemist and microbiologist Louis Pasteur's 1862 findings on how germs cause disease revolutionized scientific theories about infectious diseases, including urinary tract infections. Antibiotics have been prescribed since World War II, based on the 1928 discovery by British bacteriologist Alexander Fleming of penicillin, the first safe and successful antibiotic.

The urinary tract is comprised of the two kidneys, the ureters (the tubes that connect the kidneys to the bladder), the bladder, and the urethra (the channel that carries urine from the bladder out of the body). In traditional Chinese medical etiology/physiology, this system is called the Lower Burner. The Lower Burner is responsible for separating "clean" body fluids from "dirty" body fluids, and facilitates the excretion of urine from the body.

Based on Pasteur's work, conventional medicine claims that bacteria such as *Escherichia coli*, virus such as the herpes simplex virus, and fungus such as candida are the cause of urinary tract infections. The most common bacteria that causes urinary tract infections is *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*). The main weapons in conventional medicine's arsenal are drugs - antibiotics to kill bacteria, and other symptom-relieving drugs for pain, etc.

Chinese medicine, which has been evolving for several thousand years, does not have a "germ theory" of disease. However, diagnosis and treatment are based on careful observation and time-tested approaches to every type of disease and injury. To diagnose health problems, symptoms are grouped into patterns, and the patterns are then typically treated with acupuncture and herbal formulas, as well as dietary modifications and other lifestyle recommendations. Two common patterns of urinary tract infections are the retention

and accumulation of Damp Heat in the body, and Spleen and Kidney Deficiency. Damp Heat accumulation can be due to the consumption of hot spicy foods, meals high in fats and sweets, alcohol consumption, certain medications, and improper personal hygiene. Spleen and Kidney Deficiency is based in chronic illness, aging, pregnancy, menopause, and emotional stress. Both these patterns are discussed in detail in the following section. Many of the traditional Chinese herbal formulas have very strong anti-bacterial or anti-viral properties, but are safe enough to take over a longer period of time. In modern China, both Western antibiotics and traditional herbal formulas are used to treat urinary tract infections, but it is generally thought that the herbal formulas are better for chronic infections.

Patterns and Treatment of Urinary Tract Infections in Chinese Medicine

Over the centuries, a complicated system of diagnosis evolved in traditional Chinese internal medicine that differentiated various types of genito-urinary problems. These patterns were classified under the title of "stranguria syndromes," and encompass the diagnosis and treatment of all urinary tract infections, urinary tract stones, urinary tract tumors, etc. The two common patterns mentioned above, Damp Heat pattern and Kidney Spleen Deficiency pattern are discussed here:

Damp Heat Pattern

Damp Heat can be caused by the habitual consumption of hot, spicy or greasy foods, sexual intercourse during menstruation, or direct attack from bacteria or virus. Damp Heat-type infections can also be triggered by certain types of drugs and by a history of irregular menstrual cycles. Symptoms include: a frequent and urgent desire to urinate; a burning or painful sensation during urination; cloudy or yellow-milky colored urine; aversion to pressure on the lower abdomen; alternating spells of fever and chills; a bitter taste in the mouth; nausea; vomiting; constipation; a yellow-sticky tongue coating; and a rapid, "soggy" pulse. Herbs that relieve these symptoms by promoting increased urination (diuresis) include akebia stem (Mu Tong), plantain (Che Qian Zi), knot grass (Bian Xu), and dianthus (Qu Mei). Among the possible Chinese herbal formulas, *UT Clearing* (Ba Zheng San) is popularly used.

UT Clearing (Ba Zheng San)

Akebia Stem (Mu Tong)
Plantain (Che Qian Zi)
Knot Grass (Bian Xu)
Dianthus (Qu Mei)
Talc (Hua Shi)
Rhubarb (Dai Huang)
Gardenia (Zhi Zi)
Licorice (Gan Cao)

Spleen Kidney Deficiency Pattern

The most common causes of any type of chronic deficiency pattern are: long-standing illness; the long-term use of immunity-suppressing drugs; slow recovery from surgery or childbirth; a health problem that is left untreated, or inadequately treated. Deficiency symptoms that apply specifically to urinary tract infections include: dribbling urination; frequent urination during the night; dull pain during urination; sporadic urination, with the urine coming in spurts; 131

recurrence of infection with fatigue; fever that comes and goes; pain or soreness in the lower back; fatigue; dizziness; pale tongue body; and a weak pulse. Herbs that promote health by tonifying the Spleen include dioscorea (Shan Yao) and poria (Fu Ling). Herbs that tonify the Kidney include rehmannia (Di Huang), cornus fruit (Shan Zhu Yu), cuscuta seed (Tu Si Zi), and schizandra fruit (Wu Wei Zi). Two widely-used and effective Chinese herbal formulas are *UrinClearing* (Zhi Bai Di Huang Wan) and *Dioscorea Formula* (Wu Bi Shan Yao Wan).

Dioscorea Formula (Wu Bi Shan Yao Wan)

Dioscorea (Shan Yao)
Poria (Fu Ling)
Alisma (Ze Xie)
Rehmannia (Shu Di Huang)
Cornus (Shan Zhu Yu)
Morinda (Ba Ji Tian)
Cuscuta(Tu Si Zi)
Eucommia (Du Zhong)
Cyathula (Niu Xi)
Schizandra (Wu Wei Zi)
Cistanche (Rou Cong Rong)

Applications of the Chinese Medicine Approach

With a urinary tract infection, any part of the tract can be infected, from the urethra to the kidneys, and the symptoms will be similar: frequent, painful, difficult urination, with urgency, burning, or dribbling. Applications of the Damp Heat or Spleen Kidney Deficiency patterns to specific areas of infection are described below.

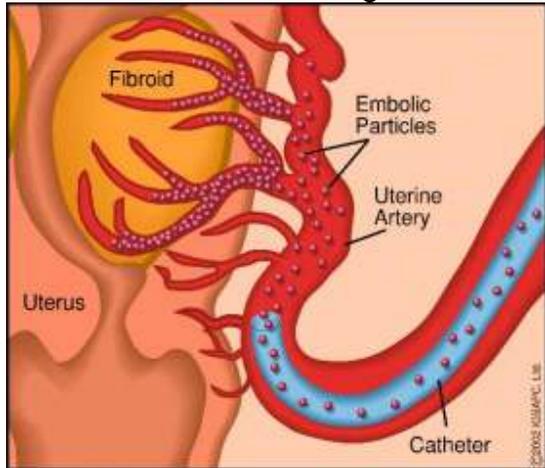
- **Cystitis.** The medical term for bladder infections is cystitis, which is especially common in women, particularly during their reproductive years. Cloudy and bloody urine is seen. Burning pain during urination indicates the Damp Heat pattern. Dull or vague pain during urination indicates the Kidney Spleen Deficiency pattern.
- **Urethritis.** Infection of the urethra is called urethritis. Bacteria, viruses or fungi can cause urethritis. A discharge containing pus from the urethra might be seen. Often, in women, the reproductive organs such as the vagina, cervix, ovaries, and fallopian tubes are likely to be infected also. The treatments for cystitis can be applied to urethritis.
- **Interstitial Cystitis.** A painful, but non-infectious, inflammation of the bladder is called interstitial cystitis. Middle-aged women are most commonly affected by this condition. Pus and blood are observed in the urine. *UrinClearing* (Zhi Bai Di Huang Wan) is recommended for interstitial cystitis.

- **Nephritis.** A kidney infection is called nephritis. *Escherichia coli*, a bacterium that lives in the large intestine, causes about 90 percent of kidney infections. Chills, fever, lower back pain, nausea, and/or vomiting are some common symptoms. Frequent urination with burning or sharp pain indicates the Damp Heat pattern. Frequent urination, urgent urination, or painful urination with back pain indicates the Kidney Spleen Deficiency pattern.
- **Ureteritis.** An infection of the ureter is called ureteritis. The spread of a kidney infection or a bladder infection to the ureter can cause ureteritis, as well as the backup of urine into the ureters from the bladder on a regular basis. The treatment for kidney infections or bladder infections can be applied to ureteritis.

CHINESE MEDICINE APPROACH TO UTERINE FIBROIDS

Susan's Story

Susan, an attractive 47 year-old hair-dresser, first came to the TCM Health Center in January 1998. She had been diagnosed with uterine fibroids about seven months previously. By the



time of her six-month follow-up with her gynecologist, the tumor had grown so big she could not button her pants, or zip up her skirt. She looked like a five-month-pregnant woman. Her gynecologist suggested an immediate hysterectomy. Susan resisted this, because she felt that losing her uterus would be a traumatic experience for her, and she wanted to explore other possibilities. She saw my article, "Endometriosis: A Natural Option," in a newspaper, and came to my clinic. At that point, her hemoglobin was 9.6. She suffered from heavy uterine bleeding, which could be triggered by coughing, squatting, bending over, even walking. She was also exhausted and depressed from loss of blood and constant worry

about her condition. After three months of weekly acupuncture treatments and Chinese herbal medicine, she felt her tummy getting smaller and smaller. She could fit into all her favorite clothes again, and the bleeding had totally stopped. I sent her back to her gynecologist to do a follow-up. She did not tell her doctor about the treatment she had from me. She was told the tumor was 50% smaller than it had been three months before. Her doctor was surprised, and asked her what she had done. When Susan told her about her experience with acupuncture, the doctor was very happy to hear about it. The doctor herself had received acupuncture for a sinus problem, and said, "It worked very well for my sinus, but I didn't know it would also be so effective for fibroid tumor." Currently, we are continuing to do treatments in order to shrink the tumor further.

After a few treatments, Susan asked me if her condition could be associated with emotional stress. Before her tumor was diagnosed, there had been a lot of stress at work, and anger with her family. A traditional Chinese medicine diagnosis and treatment can give a clear answer to this question.

Uterine Fibroids in Conventional Medicine

Uterine fibroids are benign tumors composed of smooth uterine muscle and connective tissue. The uterus is the most common site for muscle tumors to occur. Conventional Western medicine believes that estrogen can trigger fibroids and make the fibroids grow more quickly. Estrogen triggers the myometrium (the smooth muscle coat of the uterus) to grow and thicken, which is where the fibroids are located. Depending on the location, fibroids are classified into "intramural fibroids" (located in the innermost layer of the uterus), "subserous fibroids" (protruding into the abdominal cavity), "submucous fibroids" (invading the endometrium) and "parasitic fibroids" (those which have migrated out of the uterus).

Statistics indicate that uterine fibroids develop most commonly in women who are in their 30s and 40s. About 30% of all women will develop fibroids by the time they reach 35. If the fibroids are surgically removed, there is a 10% chance they will grow back. This might be the reason that hysterectomies are so widely favored by doctors to treat uterine fibroids. Actually, uterine fibroids are the most common reason for hysterectomies in the United States. About 30% of all the hysterectomies performed in this country are for uterine fibroids. Some complications of hysterectomy include hemorrhaging, eventual ovarian failure, loss of bladder function,

urinary incontinence, depression, and infections. Some studies estimate that up to 70% of all hysterectomies performed in this country are either unnecessary or can be avoided by using alternative approaches. Traditional Chinese medicine therapy for uterine fibroid tumors, using acupuncture and herbal medicine, is the oldest known form of medicine which is still in wide use today.

Patterns of Uterine Fibroids in Chinese Medicine

The traditional Chinese medicine category which includes uterine fibroid tumors is "Zheng Xia." Zheng Xia is defined as "masses in the uterus with a feeling of pain, swelling, or fullness, and with bleeding in severe cases." *The Yellow Emperor's Classic of Medicine* recorded this disease in the third century BCE. All traditional Chinese medicine gynecology books address this condition in great detail as it has been treated by various schools of medicine over the last two thousand years. Three patterns of uterine fibroids are differentiated in traditional Chinese medicine. Each pattern is differentiated in terms of specific qualities of the menstrual period, abdominal sensations, changes in breast tissue, appearance of the tongue, and qualities of the pulse. The leading herbs and herbal formulas used to treat each pattern are listed.

Chi Stagnation and Blood Stasis

Emotional stress or physical trauma are the most common causes of Chi stagnation. Blood stasis can be caused by abnormally heavy bleeding with menses, blood loss during and after childbirth, or an "improper" sex life (excessive sexual activity, or having sex while menstruating). Symptoms include: regular cycles with heavy bleeding, or scanty but long-lasting bleeding; breast distention; abdominal swelling or pain; a pulling sensation in the anus; a dark-red tongue body with purple dots; and a soggy-thin, deep-wiry, or thin-choppy pulse. The fibroid tumors are felt as masses that are either fixed (not moving), or moveable on palpation. Susan falls into this pattern. Cnidium (Chuan Qiong), angelica (Dang Gui), red peony root (Chi Shao), and corydalis (Yan Hu Suo) are important herbs for this pattern, and *BlockageASE (Shao Fu Zhu Yu Tang)* is the leading formula used to address this combined pattern.

Yin Deficiency and Empty-Fire Blazing

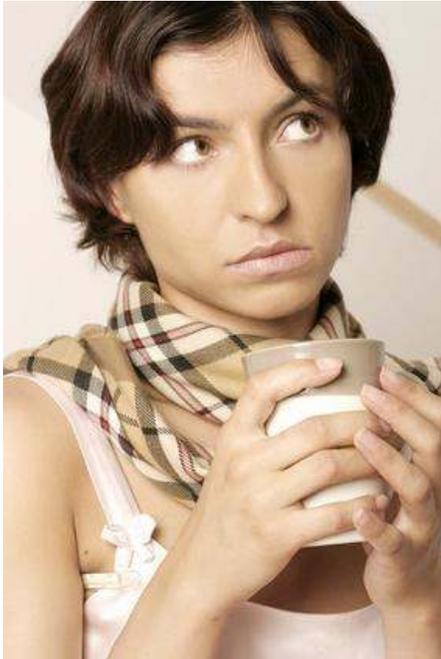
Deficiency of Kidney energy or chronic illness is the origin of this pattern. It is an advanced stage of Yin Deficiency. Symptoms include: early periods with heavy or scanty, long-lasting bleeding; a hot sensation in the chest or abdomen; a sensation of itching in the breast, or a feeling of sharp or distending pain in the breast; blood-streaked white discharge or yellow-white vaginal discharge after periods; a red tongue, dry or with a yellow coating; and a wiry-thin or thin-rapid pulse. Anemarrhena (Zhi Mu), and phellodendron (Huang Bai) are the leading herbs used to address this pattern. *Water Fire Balance (Zhi Bai Di Huang Wan)* is a widely-used herbal formula in China.

Liver Chi Stagnation and Spleen Deficiency

Deficiency of Spleen energy is the origin of this pattern. Symptoms include: regular or late periods with heavy bleeding; a pulling sensation of the lower abdomen; loose bowels; thin vaginal discharge after periods; a pale tongue or thin-white tongue coating; and a soggy-thin or thin-wiry pulse. The fibroid tumor is a soft mass. Buplerum (Chai Hu), and peony (Bai Shao) are widely-used herbs, and *Liver Spleen Harmonizer (Xiao Yao San)* is a leading formula to address this pattern.

CHINESE MEDICINE FOR VAGINAL YEAST INFECTIONS

Vaginal yeast infections are one of the commonest health problems around. Generally, my patients come to me for other reasons, but they often suffer from yeast infections as well. One



day recently three women who came to my clinic asked me if I knew of something they could use for a yeast infection. Each of these women is a good example of a typical yeast infection pattern.

Judith is a school teacher who has had a persistent vaginal infection for nine months. The various suppositories, creams and gels she has tried give temporary relief, but her symptoms of intense burning, itching, and redness have never completely disappeared. The onset of the vaginal infection was preceded by a sinus infection, for which Judith took antibiotics. Not everyone who takes antibiotics develops a subsequent yeast infection, but there is a strong correlation between the two. Antibiotics inhibit all types of bacterial growth, including the beneficial bacteria that inhabit the digestive and reproductive organs. Without bacteria to maintain a normal balance, yeast cells often increase dramatically.

Rebecca is the mother of three small children. She experienced her first vaginal yeast infection during her first pregnancy, and has continued to have them since then. Rebecca's infections are particularly likely to recur when she is under stress, when her immune system is deficient, or when she is taking birth control pills. She, too, has tried most of the over-the-counter remedies available to combat her symptoms of itching and cottage-cheese-like discharge, but she seems to be on an endless cycle of infections.

Nancy is a heavy-set woman in her fifties with diabetes. Abnormally high sugar levels in the blood disrupt the body's normal acid-base or pH balance and promote yeast overgrowth. Because of her diabetes, Nancy has a long history of yeast infections.

From these cases, we can make a list of common triggers for vaginal yeast infections: stress, pregnancy, diabetes, antibiotics, steroids, birth control pills, pH imbalance, and obesity. The immune system is probably the most important factor in whether or not we develop infections. Living in a constant state of stress weakens the immune system. Steroid drugs like cortisone suppress the immune system, leaving the way open for bacteria, viruses, and fungus to proliferate.

Because the species of fungus that causes yeast infections is *Candida albicans*, a condition of yeast overgrowth is often called candidiasis. Some Western doctors have been reluctant to consider candidiasis an actual disease because *C. albicans* is a normal inhabitant of the human body, rather than an invasive organism. Ordinarily, fungus, bacteria, and viruses are kept in balance by each other, by the normal feedback systems in our bodies, and by our immune systems. The standard approach of Western medicine to control a pathogen is to kill off the organism or sharply curtail its growth. The medications used to treat vaginal yeast infections are designed to kill off yeast cells and nothing more.

The approach of Chinese medicine is more comprehensive. Acupuncture, Chinese herbal formulas, and dietary modification are used in combination. The goal is to bring the yeast cells under control, reduce the nutrient-rich environment that is encouraging them to grow, and strengthen the immune system to prevent recurrence. I will give you an idea of the approach I use at my clinic to treat vaginal yeast infections.

First, excess yeast cells are killed by external application of an herbal formula. Raw herbs are boiled with water to make a liquid that can be used as a douche or to wash the affected area. Some standard herbs with anti-fungal properties are: Radix Sopharae Flavescentis (Ku Shen), Cortex Dictamni Dasycarpi Radicis (Bai Xian Pi), Cotex Phellodendri (Huang Bai), Semen Cnidii Monnieri (She Chuang Zi), Rhizoma Atractylodis (Cang Zhu), Semen Soicis Lachryma-jobi (Yi Yi Ren), Flos Chrysanthemi Indici (Ye Ju Hua), and Herba Taraxaci Mongolici cum Radice (Pu Gong Ying). Other herbal formulas are taken internally. These are designed to boost the functioning of the immune system, and to clear the body of conditions that promote yeast overgrowth. One of the best things about these herbs is that they don't have harmful side effects. They can be used safely over a period of time without problems. Many women keep a spare bag of the anti-fungal herbs on hand in case they develop an infection suddenly.

Acupuncture treatments work with herbs to stimulate the immune response, clear excess heat and eliminate dampness from the system, and rebalance the body's energy.

Once an infection is under control, the next step is to prevent further infections. A healthy diet and a strong immune system are the keys to permanent freedom from recurring infections. The typical American diet is high in sweets, dairy, and wheat, all of which promote yeast growth. These foods are not really good for anyone, even healthy people, but they are especially risky for anybody who has ever had a yeast infection. A complete yeast-elimination diet is very difficult to achieve, but it is important to cut down as much as possible on sweets, fats, dairy products, wheat-based products (bread, pasta), fermented foods (alcohol, tamari sauce, vinegar), and mushrooms. You can often substitute soy products for dairy products, using soy milk, soy cheese, or soy yogurt, and you can use tofu as a substitute for cream cheese in cooking. Rice and oats are good alternatives to wheat, and it is possible to obtain yeast-free breads at a number of stores.

CHINESE HERBS FOR WEIGHT LOSS

Chinese herbs can also be great for losing weight. If you don't know anything about it, let this article be your guide.



Obesity is one of the main health risks that have been scourging a lot of people in every part of the world. It is a very severe condition that about two thirds of American adult is suffering from it and one among three is considered to be critically overweight. If your body's fat ratio is anywhere from 20 to 30% above your normal weight for your height, age and sex, then you are definitely considered obese. Therefore, what's the best thing you must do? Would you opt for Chinese herbs in order for you to get rid of those fats?

On top of being unattractive and uncomfortable, obesity may increase the threat for severe conditions like infertility, diabetes, cardiovascular illnesses, stroke, and high blood pressure, complications during pregnancy, uterine fibroids, gall stones and kidney diseases. Having extra body weight can give you additional stress on your joints which may increase the threat of having arthritis.

Metabolic rates differ between persons. This would mean that various individuals burn calories at varied rates. There are numerous reasons for such that may include genetics. If you consume a lot of foods than you must on regular meals, you will surely gain weight. For instance, you eat a hundred of calories each day than you require, you will definitely gain extra pounds in your weight in approximately one month.

Most weight loss professionals blame inactive way of living for gaining weight than consuming excess calories. This is mainly for the reason that exercise do not merely burn huge amounts of calories, it also creates muscle.

The mixture of exercise and diet can also be supported by different Chinese herbs which are particularly utilized to enhance metabolism and curbing appetite. However, it is necessary to have knowledge about the possible side effects in using herbs, especially in combinations.

Chinese Herbs for Obesity

- Aloe Vera is used to cleanse the digestive tract and helps digestion which enhances the uptake of various nutrients and enhance metabolic rate.
- Astragalus helps in nutrients absorption and increases energy levels. However, this herb must not be consumed when you have a fever.
- Fenugreek is helpful in breaking up the fats inside the liver.
- Goji Berry facilitates in controlling and reversing of obesity.
- Guarana has caffeine contents that can suppress appetite, increase metabolic rate and is mildly diuretic as well.
- Spirulina is also very efficient in solving obesity symptoms. It is loaded with proteins and it has all forms of amino acids. Thus Spirulina is also called complete food.
- Yohimbe enhances metabolism and the ability to burn fats. It can also be used to suppress appetite.

All of these herbs are tested to be clinically effective in losing weight. They are also safe and do not offer in side effects. Some of these Chinese herbs are even considered foods in Chinese diet. If utilized properly, they can successfully become a part of every person's meal.

CHINESE HERBS FOR LOW SEX DRIVE

Chinese herbs used to enhance low sex drive have been known for so many years and they provide something that prescription drugs are not able to give - improve sexual drive. The ones you will read in this article are proven to be effective and will surely work for you.



So, what makes Chinese herbs so effective that they are reliable to increase libido and low sex drive? The answer for this question lies in their concept that a person's sexual health is connected to his general health. Therefore, a person must improve his general well being in order to have a robust libido.

Let's take notice at the most widespread causes of low sex drive and how it can be treated. Poor blood circulation is known to be one of the common causes of low libido or erectile dysfunction. For general health and sexual wellness you require strongly blood pumping all over the body and to the extremities in particular. As the blood gets to the genitals, you will need enough nitric oxide. This chemical is vital particularly to erection and when you don't have sufficient supply of it you will fail to have an erection.

The next cause will be the testosterone. It is definitely the vital male hormone so, you really need sufficient of it in order to increase your sex drive. If you lack it, you know what will happen next. Last on the list of the common causes of low libido are the curse of modern lifestyle-fatigue, low energy and stress. If you have low energy level then what will your body utilize for your sex drive? Stress is truly a sex drive killer as well as fatigue.

So, what will help you fight the above mention sex drive threats? Let's begin with the stimulating Chinese herbs of Ginkgo Biloba and Ginseng. They enhance energy, boost mood and are incredible blood stimulants, improving the body's oxygen and blood flow. Both have an antioxidant action that helps to sustain and secure blood vessel and lessen arteriosclerosis lesions. They also facilitate in increasing the half life factor of endothelium relaxation, which is crucial for tough erection.

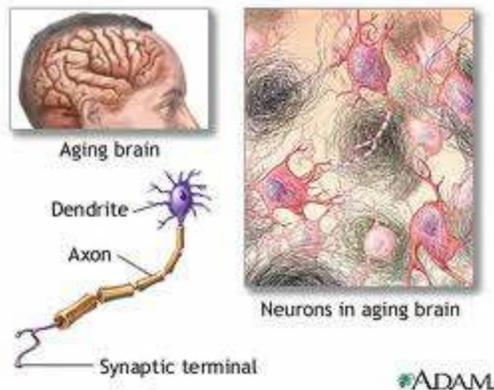
Third kind of Chinese herbs which can be effective for such malady is the Maca. It is said that the Incan soldiers consume the maca herb every time they will have a battle in order to assure that they bodies are strong and are prepared for scrupulous physical action. However, they recognized that this herb was able to enhance libido so the soldier were prohibited to take the herb after each battle so as to save those women from their sexual desire.

Fourth can be the Saw Palmetto. The herb is known for its aphrodisiac components. Also, it is popular as a helpful property keeping the accurate hormonal poise of the prostate glad that is essential for most advantageous sexual function. This herb is also known to strengthen the overall health of male reproductive organs and improves sex drive and sexual desire.

Nowadays, there are so many herbal sex pills which mix Chinese herbs to enhance libido for you to obtain a dosage of natural supplement in just a single serving. If you live a reasonable lifestyle and you eat nutritious foods and try any of these herbs in a month or more and you will surely improve your sexual health and general wellness.

Chinese Herbal Remedies for Senile Dementia

Chinese herbs are the all natural based means of mending certain kinds of maladies which infect people; hereditary, developed, or otherwise. Each herbal prescription is a brew of



assorted herbs that when put together get hold of a remedy to a specific illness. Each mixture is determined by the person's yin and yang condition in order to formulate a cure that is suiting to the patient. For this article we will be focusing our attention on dementia and some Chinese herbal treatments that are based on which definition you would go for.

The first definition for dementia lies in the balance of 'chi' found in the body. This chi is the central source of energy in your body; the stuff that keeps you going. The resulting disruption in chi is caused by the buildup of negative

energy in the body. This negative energy comes from various sources: unhealthy lifestyles, excessive stress, or personal problems that affect both your body and mind. Now this buildup targets the entrances of the heart and specific pressure points of the body. Both are vital areas in your body and buildup of negative energy located here disrupts the flow of the natural energy in such a way that dementia would inevitably occur. In cases like this, the Chinese herbs: ginseng, rehmannia, tang kuei, atractylodes, zizyphus, licorice, and polygala can be used to undo this disruption of internal energy; chasing away the negative chi and restoring the balance in the body.

Dementia here is believed to be developed when the liver chi disrupts the stomach chi, hence making unbearable disruptions for the digestive functions of your body. The liver chi's negative source is rooted to your depressive emotional states. Buildup of unhealthy phlegm happens due to the undigested food in your body. The main idea here is to cure the phlegm which in turn cures dementia. Chinese herbs that can do so are understood to be the following: ginseng, hollen, pinellia, evodia, coptis, gardenia, bupleurum, peony, tang kuei, zizyphus, and aconite. This brew clears out the phlegm, dispels the negative energy in the liver, and balances out the chi in your liver and stomach as well, therefore saying goodbye to dementia.

Dementia in this part is said to be begin from a vacancy of the matter making up a material found in the hollow spaces of bones called the marrow, and brain, as well as by sluggish blood clogging up the entrances and outlets of your heart. Following this line of thought, Chinese herbs red peony, cnidium, persica, carthamus, onion and musk clear out the congested orifices, and jujube have been chosen to complete a prescription to rid your system of dementia. Adding the all time favorite rice wine to the formula makes it all the more effective, and needless to mention a tasty cocktail for our alcoholic friends. This blend helps clear out the congested entrances and outlets in your heart, as well as fills in the empty spaces in your marrow as well as your brain that cause dementia.

Chinese herbs have been used for many years and have been passed down across generations. Hence we believe in its power to cure certain diseases due to its customary properties. Though this is a given fact we must still bear in mind that caution must be taken into consideration when getting involved in any treatment which utilizes herbs as its main means of medication. Medications prescribed to us must be taken in at proper dosages to peel its full effect, too much or too little of something for that matter may result in graver harms.

CERTIFIED CHINESE HERBOLOGY ONLINE COURSE - SESSION 5 – QUESTION & ANSWERS

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP, PC: _____

PHONE: _____

FAX: _____

E-MAIL: _____

Please be sure to fill out the information above, complete the test and e-mail or fax it back to us at iridology@netzero.net or 530-878-1119. We will grade your question & answer session and will let you know if we have any questions or concerns. **Please use a separate sheet to do this assignment.**

1. What is Pelvic Inflammatory Disease?
2. What is the definition of damp heat?
3. A useful Chinese herb that can help to prevent stroke is _____.
4. What is Multiple Sclerosis and how is it seen in Chinese medicine?
5. What are carrots good for?
6. What is heat obstruction and blood stasis?
7. Astragalus is very well-known for?
8. What is the middle burner disorder?
9. What is Candidiasis?
10. Some food allergies can produce a severe reaction called _____.
11. What is an endogenous opioid system?
12. What herbs counteract tumors?
13. What is asthma and how is it described in TCM?
14. What is dysmenorrhea?
15. What are phytoestrogens and what are they good for?
16. What is Wood Root (Ban Lan Gen) and what is it used for?
17. Please list and describe the 5 different types of headaches.