

Acupuncture & IBS



Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a complex disorder in which the intestines lose their ability to efficiently move their contents. The main symptoms of IBS are abdominal pain, bloating, diarrhea, and/or constipation. Less common symptoms may include headaches, fatigue, depression and anxiety. Symptoms may be triggered by stress, diet, emotional factors, hormone levels and medications.

Let's talk acupuncture Acupuncture and Chinese medicine can offer a safe, effective, natural and drug-free way to address IBS. This holistic healthcare system looks at the body differently than Western medicine. According to Chinese medicine, the body is like a garden that must be cultivated and maintained in order to grow strong and remain healthy. Good health happens when all of the organs and meridian systems are balanced and working together.

How does your garden grow? According to Chinese medical theories, there are several possible causes for IBS.

One of these is an imbalance of the spleen. The spleen is the organ in charge of digestion and assimilation of foods and liquids. One of the main functions of the spleen is to aid in the production of spleen Qi. Spleen Qi is the energy that provides power and nourishment for the entire body.



Another function of the spleen is to produce blood from the food it breaks down and to convert it into usable energy to power your body. If your spleen isn't properly cared for, the body's energy levels will not be supported and illness may occur.

The spleen is easily affected and weakened by poor eating habits and diet, antibiotics, excessive worry, or a weak constitution. When a weakened spleen cannot metabolize or process food efficiently, "dampness" appears in the body. Dampness occurs when rotting, undigested food sits in the gut, causing a variety of symptoms. If dampness "rises" to your head, you may experience headaches, a "foggy" feeling and an inability to concentrate. Over time, dampness can lead to bloating, fullness and loose stools.

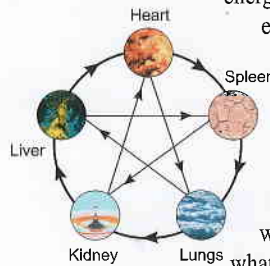


Another possible scenario is an imbalance in the liver. According to Chinese medicine, the liver is associated with emotional health. Stress and anger directly influence the function of your liver. Alcohol,

drugs and medications, or a poor diet further compromise its function. When this happens, your liver energy overflows, in a figurative sense, and attacks the spleen. If your spleen is already weakened, it can be easily overcome. The result can be stress-induced IBS.

If your liver is compromised, you may experience alternating diarrhea and constipation, as well as bloating, gas, headaches, and dull pain. In this case, your liver may be the root of the problem, and your spleen the secondary problem.

An imbalance in kidney *yang* could also cause IBS symptoms. Kidney *yang* is energy that provides warmth for your body. This energy warms up your spleen to aid in the digestion and breakdown of food. If your kidney energies are compromised, you may experience early morning diarrhea and possibly bladder incontinence, cold limbs, weak knees and a sore back.



Acupuncture and Chinese medicine can create a clear picture of the root imbalance(s) that lead to IBS symptoms. When you meet with your practitioner, he or she will determine what organ and meridian systems are contributing to your IBS. They may also suggest adjunct therapies such as herbs, dietary changes, breathing techniques and exercises in order to maximize your healing.

Acupuncture and Chinese medicine can provide a safe, natural, drug-free and effective way to address IBS.

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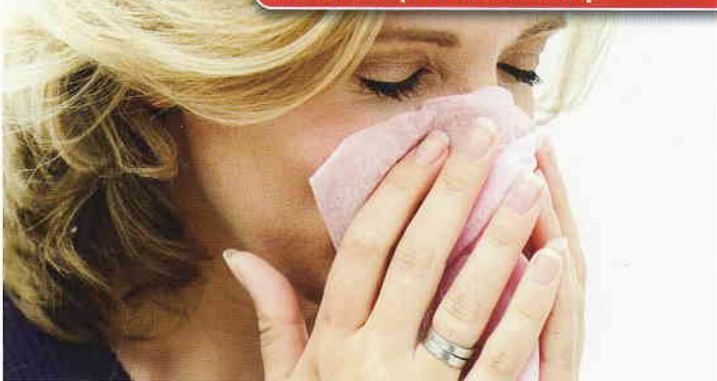
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ALLERGIES

How Acupuncture Helps



Allergies, seasonal or year round, are an ongoing problem for many individuals. Seasonal allergies typically affect people during a particular season or time of year. They are also referred to as outdoor allergies and are generally triggered by tree, grass and weed pollens or outdoor mold spores. Year round allergies also known as indoor allergies are typically brought on by animal dander, dust mites, mold spores or insect allergens. There are also food allergies, which occur as a result of eating a culprit food, and can also create physical and/or emotional symptoms such as body hives, swelling, itching or redness of the skin, depression and/or moodiness.

Quick facts:

Allergies according to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) can be due to a variety of factors. Below are some of the more common TCM diagnoses that your acupuncturist may discover and treat.

Wei Qi deficiency
Spleen weakness
Kidney deficiency
Lung deficiency

appealing option for people looking for a new way to combat their allergies.

According to Chinese medical theory, the symptoms and signs that indicate a Western diagnosis of allergies relate to imbalances in the meridian and Organ Systems of the body. These imbalances may stem from a variety of causes, including stress, poor diet, foods that don't agree with your body, constitutional weakness, pollutants and environmental toxins.

Over time, if imbalances remain within the body, they will affect the functions of the Organ Systems. Some of these Organ Systems are involved in the production of Wei Qi (pronounced "way chee"). According to the theories of acupuncture and Chinese medicine, it is important to have the correct quality and quantity of Wei Qi circulating around the body in order to stay healthy.

No matter what kind of allergy you suffer from, environmental or food related, acupuncture can provide needed relief. While medications (over-the-counter or prescribed) often come with unwanted side-effects, acupuncture does not. This makes acupuncture an

What is Wei Qi? The Chinese concept of Wei Qi is similar to the Western concept of the immune system. Wei Qi functions to protect and defend the body against foreign substances, that if not caught can lead to allergies. When Wei Qi is strong and abundant, we remain healthy. When the supply of Wei Qi becomes deficient, health is compromised and we become vulnerable to foreign invaders such as dust, mold, animal dander, bacteria, viruses and pollen. People who have a Wei Qi deficiency are prone to allergies and frequent colds.

Acupuncture and Chinese medicine support and strengthen the systems of the body that are involved in the production of Wei Qi. By building up the supply of Wei Qi, and facilitating the smooth and free flow of it through the body, symptoms and signs related to allergies could be greatly reduced or eliminated.

What will an acupuncturist do? An acupuncturist will conduct a thorough exam, taking a complete health history. He/She will then develop a unique treatment plan that will address your specific concerns. The goals of the treatment plan will be to eliminate visible symptoms and signs, while addressing the root cause(s) and underlying imbalances affecting the quality and quantity of Wei Qi.

Acupuncture treatments may be combined with herbs, dietary changes, massage (tuina), or exercise. These therapies accelerate the healing process in order to balance, build, and support the health and functioning of your body's systems.

Acupuncture and Chinese medicine are a drug-free, safe, natural and effective way to eliminate hay fever, allergies or the common cold.

Seasonal allergy tips:

1. Flush your nose with a Neti pot.
2. Add spicy foods and omega-3's to your diet.
3. Keep your windows closed during allergy season to prevent dust and pollen from entering.
4. Put on a dust mask when you are doing yard or house work.
5. Do not hang your clothes out to dry in the sun, as they will gather dust, mold and pollen.
6. Come in for an acupuncture tune-up.

If you suffer from food allergies:

1. See an allergist and get tested for a proper diagnosis of a food allergy.
2. Avoid the foods that cause your reaction.
3. Peanuts, the proteins in cow's milk, shellfish, tree nuts, fish, eggs, gluten, wheat and soy are the most common food allergens.
4. It is possible to outgrow some food allergies.
5. Ask about ingredients at restaurants or when eating food prepared by another person.
6. Read food labels carefully.

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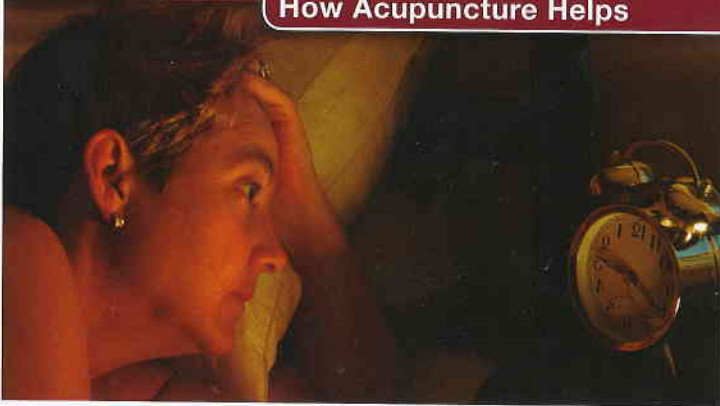
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INSOMNIA

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You settle into a warm, relaxing bed, close your eyes and nothing happens. You just can't fall asleep. Hours go by and you're still awake. The next day you feel tired, grouchy and are unable to focus. Does this sound familiar?

Sleepless nights happen to almost everyone at some time, but ongoing insomnia can indicate a deeper issue and could lead to further health concerns. Unfortunately, a common approach to

treating insomnia includes prescription sleeping medications, which can cause side effects or even dependence. That's one of the many reasons to consider an all-natural approach to treating your sleep problems. Acupuncture can be a very effective way to improve your sleep quality without side-effects.

Quick facts:

Tips for healthy sleep:

- Plan to go to bed and wake up at the same time every day.
- Exercise regularly, but not within a few hours of bedtime.
- Don't eat large meals before bed.
- Try not to nap. If you really need to nap, try to keep it short, less than 45 minutes.
- Limit caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine.
- Relax. Wind down before going to sleep.

One bad night...or an ongoing issue? Occasional insomnia is a very common problem, affecting about one in four Americans. It can happen to anyone, but is more common in older adults.

Symptoms of insomnia include:

- Difficulty falling asleep
- Waking up during the night
- Waking up too early
- Daytime fatigue and irritability
- Frustration and moodiness

Insomnia can be very frustrating, but it's more than just an annoyance. When insomnia becomes ongoing, or chronic, your body is unable to get the rest and renewal it needs for you to feel your

best. In fact, a lack of quality sleep can cause problems such as difficulty concentrating, diminished energy, low mood, and trouble performing everyday tasks. Since sleep strengthens the immune system, insomnia can leave you susceptible to many other health concerns. Luckily, you have options when experiencing chronic insomnia.

Acupuncture can help According to the theories of acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), conditions such as insomnia are a sign of an imbalance in Qi (pronounced "chee"), the vital energy that animates the body and protects it from illness.

This imbalance can stem from a number of causes such as stress, anxiety, medications, depression, hormones and chronic pain. To determine the underlying causes of your insomnia, your acupuncturist will take many factors into account including your lifestyle, as well as your emotional and mental well-being. He/she will then work to restore the balance and flow of Qi by inserting fine, sterile needles at specific points along the body.

Your acupuncturist may also suggest aromatherapy, yoga, meditation or other additional therapies. You may find that you sleep better after your very first session, though you will most likely receive the most benefit from a series of treatments.

Your acupuncturist can get to the root of your sleep issues by taking into account all of the factors that may be contributing to your sleep disturbance. With this ancient form of health care, you can treat your symptoms, improve your overall health and well-being, and start looking forward to a great night's sleep, every night.

Get a great night's sleep naturally with Acupuncture!

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DEPRESSION

How Acupuncture Helps



Depression affects about 121 million people worldwide and can be debilitating for those who experience it.¹ Prolonged feelings of sadness, discouragement and hopelessness greatly affect the quality of life.

At one time or another, most of us have experienced some form of depression. It is a healthy response to events in our lives that seem overwhelming. When we are balanced, physically and emotionally, we can easily bounce back from a depressed state and move on

Quick facts:

Here are some tips to help combat depressive symptoms:

- Develop a supportive group of trusted friends, family, and co-workers who can lend an ear and listen to you.
- Breathe, go slow, and think things through. Do not make too many life changes all at once. A few at a time will keep you from feeling overwhelmed.
- Try to get at least twenty minutes of exercise at least three days a week, if not more. Take a daily walk, breathe deeply, and let it all go.
- Remember, you are not alone. Others are having similar experiences.

with our lives. When negative feelings and emotions become persistent and consistent, depression may set in.

Research published in Journal of Affective Disorders in 2010 covered 207 clinical studies conducted on the effectiveness of acupuncture in treating depressive disorders. According to this, the efficacy of acupuncture was comparable to antidepressants

alone in improving clinical response and alleviating symptom severity of Major Depressive Disorder. Additionally, the incidence of adverse reactions of acupuncture treatment was significantly lower than that of antidepressants.²

How can acupuncture help? Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) incorporate thousands of years of experience in treating depression. Not only can they help to alleviate the signs and symptoms accompanying depression, they can address the root cause(s) and underlying imbalances that have contributed to the problem, safely and naturally.

Acupuncturists are aware of the powerful interplay between our body and emotions, and that the two are inseparable. When we experience emotional upset, our physiological state may become disrupted. Likewise, when we experience physical problems, our emotions can become greatly affected.

Depressed Qi? Over time, this disruption leads to what an acupuncturist calls "stagnant" or "depressed" Qi, (pronounced "chee") or vital energy. Qi is a concept unique to the theories and principles of TCM. According to these theories, Qi is the vital energy that animates the body and protects it from illness and pain. It flows through the body in pathways called meridians. When it becomes stagnant or depressed, physical and/or emotional symptoms result. Practitioners of acupuncture and TCM are specifically trained to detect and correct imbalances in the human body. Treatments are focused on balancing and activating the Qi by manipulating corresponding points on the body.

The stagnant or depressed Qi diagnosis is unique to acupuncture and TCM. Over time, if it is not addressed it can lead to a disharmony within our body, affecting our physical and emotional well-being, which may lead to depression.

What will an acupuncturist do? An acupuncturist will take a complete health history in order to find out where, why, and how Qi has become stagnant or depressed. They will develop a unique treatment plan tailored to specific signs and symptoms of each individual.

Typically, the treatment plan goals will be to activate the movement of Qi throughout the entire body, as well as to address the root cause(s) and underlying imbalances. By treating the body as a whole and unique organism, your acupuncturist will support you in your recovery from illness and disease, moving you toward health and happiness.

Acupuncture and TCM provide safe, natural, and effective ways to address depression. The focus is to restore a balanced and continuous flow of Qi throughout the body and mind. Acupuncture is not a "quick fix." You may need to receive weeks or months of treatment in order to see lasting results. Every person is unique so give yourself the time required to experience the maximum benefits that acupuncture and TCM have to offer.

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STRESS

How Acupuncture Helps



Stress is a natural response of the body to the various demands we place upon it. In ancient times, our stress response, also known as our fight or flight response, provided us with energy to preserve life during difficult situations, such as an attack or threat by a wild animal. Unfortunately, modern day stress is considerably higher, more frequent and more consistent than what our predecessors experienced. Today, we do not have to look much further than out our windows, or on our computer screens, to view various forms of stressors—everything from prime-time news and road rage, to the forty-hour work week, and cell phones.

Quick facts:

Some of the signs and symptoms of an overactive response to stress include anger, anxiety, asthma, depression, depressed immune system, digestive disorders, headaches, heart disease, high blood pressure, joint pain, and weight problems.

However, stress is not necessarily always negative. There is a distinction between healthy and unhealthy stress. Healthy stressors are usually short lived and keep us alert and motivated, and support our body's strength and vitality.

Our response to stress can either help or hinder our body's ability to cope with these various stressors in our lives. Healthy responses to stress include appropriate physical exercise, good eating habits, positive thinking, adequate rest, and reaching out to friends and family for support. Unhealthy responses to stress include negative thinking, overexertion, poor eating habits, lack of sleep, and isolation. These unhealthy responses can cause the body to work harder than it needs to and can trigger physical and mental health issues. Over time, ongoing stress and unhealthy responses to stress can actually be detrimental to our health.

Medical studies have shown that with increased and consistent stress, our white blood cells, which defend our body against viruses, decrease. This results in lower immune resistance, ultimately leading to physical disease and emotional instability.

Even if the stressors are no longer present, the body continues to keep the stress response active. This results in the depletion of

our nervous system, lymphatic organs (spleen, thymus, and lymph nodes), kidneys and adrenal glands, which can pave the way for a wide variety of signs and symptoms.

There is hope! Practitioners of acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) have helped people cope with stress for thousands of years. The ancient theories of TCM on how stress affects the organs are similar to those of Western medicine. However, TCM theory and treatment goes far beyond treating signs and symptoms and also addresses the root cause(s) of the problem.

One way that stress affects the body is by causing a depletion or blockage of Qi (pronounced "chee"), especially that of the kidneys and adrenals. Qi is the vital energy or power that animates and supports the functions of the body. It flows through specific pathways, called meridians, and provides nourishment for the entire body. When Qi becomes "blocked" or the supply is inadequate, the body and organ systems become "stressed out" and our health is then compromised.

With acupuncture and TCM, the practitioner's job is to support and restore the integrity of the various organs affected by the stress response, along with evaluating the quality and quantity of Qi.

Your acupuncturist may also suggest adjunct therapies to enhance treatment and speed healing. Proper eating habits, as well as exercise, stretching, movement and meditation practices, support and promote a balanced and healthy body, mind and spirit.

Acupuncture and TCM can provide a safe and effective alternative for the treatment of stress.

Ways to combat stress:

1. Get adequate sleep. Try for at least eight hours of restful and restorative sleep.
2. Practice meditative exercises. Qi Gong, Tai Chi and Yoga can help create a healthy body-mind awareness and help free your mind of stressful thoughts.
3. Eat a well balanced diet. Maintain a healthy diet with adequate amounts of complex carbs, vegetables, fruits, protein and healthy fats.
4. Have fun! Make time for relaxing activities, enjoyable hobbies and lots of laughter in your life.
5. Breathe. Relaxed deep breathing is one of the most simple and easy techniques that can be used for reducing stress.

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