



David Mortell Licensed Acupuncturist
 Pittsburgh Acupuncture Center
 5655 Bryant Street
 Pittsburgh, PA 15206
 412-363-0886

Enhance Your Endocrine Health with Acupuncture

The endocrine system is responsible for hormonal functions in the body and produces thirty distinct hormones each of which has a very specific job to do. This system controls your physical growth, mood, hormone output, reproduction, mental functionality, and immune system. When not working properly you become more susceptible to disease and your ability to fight off infection is weakened. Endocrine glands and their functioning impacts every area of your health.



The keystone of acupuncture and Oriental medicine has always been awakening the body's natural intelligence to heal itself and restore balance to the system of energy pathways (called "meridians") that crisscross the body. If the meridians within your body have become depleted you can suffer from tiredness, infertility, weight gain, depression, digestive problems, hair loss, arthritis, and feeling chilled no matter the temperature.

What are the endocrine glands and what do they do?

The major endocrine glands include the adrenals, pancreas, pineal, pituitary, reproductive and thyroid glands.

Adrenals - Adrenal glands regulate the body's response to stress and are made of two parts, each of which secretes a separate set of hormones. The outer part produces corticosteroid hormones that regulate the balance of salt and water, stress response, metabolism, immune function, and sexual development and function. The inner part secretes adrenaline hormones that increase blood pressure and heart rate in response to stress. Over time chronic elevated stress levels can lead to weight gain, decreased resistance to infections, fatigue, muscle aches and low blood sugar.

Pancreas - The pancreas produces insulin and glucagon-two hormones that work together to supply the body's cells with a constant supply of energy in the form of glucose.

Pineal - The pineal gland is also known as the *epiphysis cerebri*, *epiphysis* or the "third eye". It produces the serotonin derivative melatonin, a hormone that affects the modulation of wake/sleep patterns and seasonal functions.

Hypothalamus /Pituitary - A collection of specialized cells that provide the primary link between the endocrine and central nervous systems. Nerve cells and hormones signal the pituitary gland to secrete or suppress the release of various hormone messages to the other glands. The pituitary gland is also responsible for secreting growth hormones.

Reproductive - These glands secrete hormones that control the development of male and female characteristics. In males these glands secrete androgen hormones, most importantly testosterone. In females they produce estrogen, progesterone, eggs and are involved in reproductive functions.

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5 Nutrients to Support Your Endocrine Health



Fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean protein are part of any healthy diet. To directly affect your endocrine system, make sure your diet includes these foods.

Fish - Fish provides your body with Omega-3, Omega-6 and Omega-9 oils. These oils are fats that directly affect cognitive function, cellular function and kidney function, all the things under the control of the endocrine system. Eating fish twice a week will aid in keeping a balanced endocrine system.

Garlic - Garlic boosts your immunity, increasing your ability to fight off infection. It also helps regulate blood sugar levels. One or two cloves of garlic a day is recommended. Include it in your cooking!

Thyroid - Thyroid hormones control the growth, temperature and function of every cell in the body. The gland acts as the metabolic engine of the body - if it secretes too little hormone the body slows and dies; if it secretes too much the body burns out and dies.

When treating a suspected endocrine condition with acupuncture and Oriental medicine, the acupuncturist seeks the root cause of the patient's imbalance. The endocrine system is closely tied to the internal balance of the Yin energy and the Yang energy. Imagine that the Yang energy is like gasoline that fuels a car, and the Yin energy is the coolant for the car's engine. Without the coolant, the engine overheats and begins to burn out. Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine work to make sure the Yin and Yang are equal within the body restoring your essential internal balance. The root of the body's energy in Oriental medicine is the Kidney meridian. Treatment used to strengthen the Kidney Meridian also restores nourishment to your endocrine glands.

Acupuncture can be used to restore hormonal balance, regulate energy levels, smooth emotions and help manage sleep and menstrual problems. Treatments take all symptoms into account and are aimed at balancing the energy in your body, optimizing your health, restoring immune function and balancing the production and release of hormones through a variety of approaches ranging from acupuncture and herbal remedies to lifestyle changes and special exercises. Many patients benefit from an integrated Eastern and Western medical approach to endocrine health. The strong point of Western medicine is intervention in life-threatening illness, whereas the strong point of Eastern medicine is increased quality of life. Therefore it is optimal to have both Eastern and Western medicine options available for the most comprehensive care.

A healthy endocrine system that continues to secrete adequate amounts of hormones will slow the aging process and keep you vibrant and healthy as you age.

Come in for a consultation to see how acupuncture and Oriental medicine can assist you with your endocrine health and help you to live a long, healthy life.

Cultivate Optimal Endocrine Health

The endocrine system provides regulation of the body through hormonal secretions. Cultivating your endocrine health combined with proper nutrition and diet can boost energy, improve appetite, reduce insomnia, relieve depression symptoms, improve circulation, relieve muscle aches and assist in recovering from endocrine disorders. One of the easiest ways to look after your endocrine system health is to eat nutritious meals and have a well balanced diet.

A few basic steps you can take to improve your endocrine health are:

Eat Slowly - Don't rush through your meals. Allow your body to properly digest food reduces after-meal fatigue, boosts your immune system, and enables your endocrine system to properly process nutritional intake.

Exercise - Regular exercise boosts the immune system, improves cardiovascular health, muscle mass, and prevents bone loss. Stress reducing exercises such as yoga, qigong, or tai chi can also be beneficial.

Manage Your Stress - Another important part of maintaining a healthy endocrine system is stress management. Having a lot of stress in your life can cause the overproduction of hormones that can lead to the failure or malfunction of many endocrine organs. Acupuncture and Oriental medicine offers many tools and techniques that can be integrated into your life to keep stress in check and allow you to enjoy a more peaceful life.

Calcium - Calcium keeps nerves healthy and ensures their ability to communicate effectively. Milk, cottage cheese, cheese, leafy greens, dried beans and yogurt are all rich in calcium.

Vitamin B and B Complex - Directly influences the nervous system's proper functioning and health and one's physical and mental performance concerning the nervous system. Found in chicken, fish, eggs, whole grains, beans and nuts.

Vitamin C - Adrenal glands have a very high content of ascorbic acid (vitamin C). This vitamin helps stimulate adrenal glands into producing more of the disease fighting hormone cortin. A continued stressful environment depletes vitamin C reserves and increases the tendency for infection and disease. Good sources of vitamin C include citrus fruits, melons, apricots, strawberries, berries, green vegetables, sweet peppers, and particularly tomatoes

Massage Taixi When Fatigued

Taixi, or Kidney 3, is the source point of the Kidney meridian and an excellent point to massage yourself whenever feeling fatigued.

To locate Taixi first locate the medial malleolus, that bone on the inner ankle. Then, locate the Achilles tendon that runs down the back of the ankle. Directly between them you will find the tender area when you press.

Massage the area on your ankle between the bone of inner malleolus and the Achilles tendon.

Rest - Take a day out of the week for rest and rejuvenation allowing your mind and body recovery time. You will be more productive the rest of the week.

Sleep - Allow six to eight hours of sleep per night in order to reduce stress and keep hormones balanced. The combination of stress and a lack of sleep may cause some of the glands to malfunction. If you are experiencing difficulties sleeping acupuncture has shown great success treating a wide array of sleep problems without any of the side effects of prescription or over-the-counter sleep aids.

Soy To The World!

That was the caption on the natural foods gift card I received from my sister for Christmas this year. "Oy to the world" would have been more fitting, given what I know about the dangers of super-hyped soy.

Soy was first used as a food sometime during the Chou Dynasty (1134-246 BC) in ancient China. It was consumed as a food only after the Chinese learned to ferment soybeans for many months to make miso, tempeh, natto, and tamari. Soy was originally planted as a way to replenish nitrogen in the soil that rice had depleted. The Chinese knew that soy was difficult to digest without fermentation. Buddhist monks purportedly ate tofu to reduce libido. Oy!

Average consumption of soy foods in China today is 10 grams (2 teaspoons) per day. In Japan, daily consumption is 30-60 grams, or 1-2 tablespoons. Asians use soy as a condiment, not as a replacement for animal foods.

Soy made its way to the United States in the early 1900's. John Kellogg, the breakfast cereal king, championed the health benefits of the legume, as he railed against the evils of eating meat. Henry Ford spent \$1.2 million in an effort to make soy plastics and a soy car.

Soy was not seriously considered for food here until World War II shortages created a need for cheap sources of protein. It has been touted as healthful for decades, without knowing the true implications of ingesting soy.

Soy, like many other legumes, nuts, seeds, and grains, contains high amounts of phytic acid, which blocks the absorption of essential minerals like calcium, magnesium, zinc, copper, and iron. Phytic acid is not neutralized by ordinary preparation methods like soaking, sprouting, and cooking. It is only neutralized through the process of long fermentation.

So what's the big deal about not getting enough minerals? Not enough zinc affects growth, immunity, intelligence, wound healing, and the production of over 300 vital enzymes in the body. Iron deficiency leads to anemia and low thyroid function. A lack of calcium contributes to bone loss, osteoporosis, and poor immunity, amongst other ailments. Both iron and zinc are necessary for the health and development of the brain and nervous system.

Soy is used extensively in infant formula, where it seems to be especially dangerous and not only for the previously mentioned reasons. Megadoses of the phytoestrogens in soy-based formula have been implicated in the current trend towards increasingly premature sexual development in girls and delayed or retarded sexual development in boys. Infants fed exclusively soy formula receive the estrogenic equivalent of at least 4 birth control pills daily!

Intake of soy phytoestrogens during pregnancy, even at moderate levels, can have adverse effects on the developing fetus and on the timing of puberty later in life. Again, these phytoestrogens contribute to earlier sexual development in girls and cause a reduction in testosterone in boys (remember those Buddhist monks!), leading to delayed or retarded sexual development.

As little as 4 tablespoons of unfermented soy products per day can cause hypothyroidism with symptoms such as fatigue and lethargy, constipation, hair loss, dry skin, and weight gain. In babies, consumption of soy is linked to autoimmune thyroid disease and aluminum toxicity. Some soy foods contain high amounts of aluminum, a result of chemical extraction processing used to make soy edible.

Aluminum toxicity is one of the factors that can contribute to Alzheimer's disease. It is also thought that soy isoflavones are a causative factor in diminished cognitive ability, doubling the chances of being diagnosed with Alzheimer's, and has been linked to brain atrophy and lower brain weights.

You would never guess at the dangers of eating soy if you believed all the advertising promoting soy as a healthy food, but don't be fooled by the marketing. And please don't just take my word for it. Do your own research. In my opinion, The Weston A. Price Foundation (<http://www.westonaprice.org/>) provides good, science-based research and information. "The Whole Soy Story: The Dark Side of America's Favorite Health Food" by Kaayla Daniels, PhD is another good source of information on the subject.

Most Americans are eating unfermented soy in the form of soy milk, tofu, soy protein isolate (protein powders, etc.), textured vegetable protein (TVP), and other food additives. I would encourage everyone to read labels on food packages and especially avoid foods that contain TVP and soy isolate protein powder.

Do not drink large quantities of soy milk, and especially avoid soy milk with Vitamin D-2. That's the synthetic, toxic form of D. If you don't want to drink cow's milk, you can use unsweetened almond milk instead of soy. If you drink cow's milk, make an effort to find raw milk.

In general limit soy consumption to 2 tablespoons per day maximum. Consume mostly fermented soy like miso, natto, tempeh, and tamari (with no MSG). It is hard enough to stay healthy in today's polluted, stressful world without adding more health challenges through our dietary choices.

To your continued good health,

David Mortell, Registered Acupuncturist
www.pittsburghacupuncturecenter.com
412 363 0886