



David Mortell Licensed Acupuncturist

Pittsburgh Acupuncture Center
5655 Bryant Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
412-363-0886

Strengthen Your Digestive Health with Acupuncture

More than 95 million Americans suffer from digestive disorders ranging from constipation, diarrhea and irritable bowel syndrome to more serious conditions such as acid reflux (GERD), ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease. In fact, more than 35 million physician office visits a year are due to gastrointestinal complaints. Reports confirm that acupuncture and Oriental medicine can offer relief from even the most complex digestive problems.



Diagnosis and Treatment of Digestive Disorders

Evidence that Oriental medicine has been used for digestive disorders can be found in early medical literature dating back to 3 AD, where specific acupuncture points and herbal formulas for borborygmus (rumbling or gurgling in the intestines), abdominal pain and diarrhea with pain are discussed.

According to Oriental medical theory, most digestive disorders are due to disharmony in the spleen and stomach. The spleen plays a central part in the health and vitality of the body, taking a lead role in the assimilation of nutrients and maintenance of physical strength. It turns digested food from the stomach into usable nutrients and Qi (energy). Many schools of thought have been formed around this organ; the premise being that the proper functioning of the "middle" is the key to all aspects of vitality.

By taking into account a person's constitution and varied symptoms, a treatment plan is designed specifically for the individual to bring their "middle" back into harmony and optimize the proper functioning of the digestive system. A variety of techniques can be used during treatment including acupuncture, lifestyle/dietary recommendations and energetic exercises to restore digestive health.

Is your digestive system functioning as well as it could? Acupuncture and Oriental medicine are extremely effective at treating a wide array of digestive disorders. Call today for more information or to schedule an appointment.

In This Issue

- Strengthen Your Digestive Health with Acupuncture**
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) and Acupuncture**
- Acupuncture Treats Acid Reflux Disease**
- Acupuncture Treats Food Poisoning**
- Reduce Your Risk of Getting Food Poisoning**
- Ginger for Intestinal Upset**

Reduce Your Risk of Getting Food Poisoning



Four simple steps to reducing the risk of food poisoning are to clean, separate, cook and chill.

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) and Acupuncture

A common disorder affecting 10 to 20 percent of adults at some point in their lives, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) was once called "spastic colon" and has a combination of symptoms that may include constipation, diarrhea, gas, bloating, fatigue and headaches that can be worsened by certain foods, stress and other irritants. IBS results from nervous interference with the normal function of the lower digestive tract. The symptoms are variable and change over time.

While other patterns may be present, IBS is typically considered a disharmony between the liver and the spleen meridians in Oriental medicine. The liver meridian is responsible for the smooth flow of Qi and blood throughout the body. This flow can be upset by emotions or stress, causing stagnation of Qi or blood. Oriental medicine views the spleen meridian as being associated with the function of digestion and transforming food into energy (Qi and blood). This can be weakened by a number of factors including overeating unhealthy foods, overwork, stress, fatigue, and lack of exercise. When the spleen meridian is weak and the liver meridian is not moving smoothly, the liver overacts on the spleen and can manifest as symptoms of IBS. Symptoms can be managed by avoiding overeating, exercise, identifying trigger foods and reducing stress.

Do you suffer from Irritable Bowel Syndrome? Call today to see how Acupuncture and Oriental medicine can improve your quality of life!

Acupuncture for Acid Reflux Disease

A study published in the *American Journal of Physiology - Gastrointestinal and Liver (2005)* indicates that stimulation of certain acupuncture points inhibits esophageal sphincter relaxations by as much as 40 percent.

Although the cause of *gastro-esophageal reflux disease*, or GERD, is still unknown, there are treatments available on the market to help with the symptoms. However, many of the existing treatments come with side effects and their effectiveness can be limited.

The *American Physiological Society* opened eyes by pointing to the effectiveness of electrical acupuncture point stimulation in reducing the key mechanism of GERD, transient lower esophageal sphincter relaxations (TLESRs). This important muscle allows food to pass into the stomach when working normally. In people who have GERD, the muscle relaxes at the wrong times, allowing stomach acid to churn up into the esophagus and cause heartburn symptoms.

By applying only mild stimulation to an acupuncture point on the wrist known as Neiguan (Pericardium 6), researchers were able to reduce the frequency of TLESRs from six to 3.5 an hour in research subjects. Sham stimulation of a hip point produced no comparable change.

Clean: Wash hands, surfaces, utensils and platters often. Rinse all produce in cold running water before peeling, cutting or eating.

Separate: Keep foods that won't be cooked separate from raw meat and poultry. Don't use the same platter and utensils for raw and cooked meats and poultry.

Cook: Cook food to a safe minimum internal temperature to destroy harmful bacteria.

Chill: Refrigerate any leftovers promptly in shallow containers.

If you are ill with diarrhea or vomiting, do not prepare food for others, especially infants, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems since they are more vulnerable to infection.

Ginger for Intestinal Upset



Ginger has been found to increase the secretion of gastric juice. In fact, ginger can be used for most digestive upsets that involve nausea, vomiting, cramping, abdominal pain, indigestion or diarrhea. This means that food is digested more quickly, creating an unfriendly environment for bacteria that could wreak havoc with your stomach and intestines.

Acupuncture Treats Food Poisoning

Food poisoning arises from eating contaminated foods containing a variety of microorganisms including bacteria, viruses and parasites and is also known as food-borne illness, infectious diarrhea, or gastroenteritis. The most common bacteria to cause food poisoning are salmonella, staphylococcus aureus, E. coli and shigella. Acupuncture and Oriental medicine can relieve symptoms, hasten recovery and strengthen the digestive system to prevent future incidents of food poisoning, avert development of chronic immune deficiencies and increase energy levels.

Food poisoning is marked by severe diarrhea, fever, cramping, abdominal pain, flu-like symptoms, vomiting and diarrhea. Most cases of food poisoning clear up on their own within a week without any medical assistance; however, it can take several months before bowel habits return to normal. Often the digestive system is severely weakened after a bout of food poisoning, making the infected person more susceptible to food poisoning in the future. A small number of persons with food poisoning develop an autoimmune disease called Reiter's syndrome. It can last for months or years and can lead to chronic arthritis.

Treatment of food poisoning is rest and hydration to prevent fluid and electrolyte loss due to vomiting and diarrhea. Acupuncture and Oriental medicine can be used to relieve nausea and vomiting, hasten recovery by assisting the body to eliminate the pathogen faster, and strengthen the digestive system to prevent any re-occurrences or development of a chronic immune disorder. After acute symptoms subside, acupuncture treatments focus on strengthening the digestive system and improving energy levels to bring about a full recovery

In a study published in the October 2007 issue of the *American Chemical Society's Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*, researchers in Taiwan looked at the role of a ginger extract in blocking the toxin that causes 210 million cases of diarrhea worldwide. The toxin is produced by enterotoxigenic E. coli, which accounts for 380,000 worldwide deaths annually. The study found that *zingiberone*, a compound in ginger, was the likely compound responsible for blocking the toxin.

Whether your digestive problem is due to eating contaminated food, stomach flu, pregnancy or motion sickness, ginger is one of the most effective agents around!

Is Lowering Your Cholesterol Really a Good Idea?

It's been 40 years now that we have been told to eat less fat and cholesterol because these foods cause heart disease. I would like to spend a little time questioning the validity of that statement. I am simply puzzled, because during those same 40 years, the incidence of heart disease has actually increased. Is it possible that saturated fat and cholesterol don't cause heart disease? And if they don't, what does?

The first study of cholesterol and atherosclerosis was published in 1936 by Lande and Sperry, researchers at NYU. They studied the arteries of people who had died violently. Lande was a pathologist! They found absolutely no correlation between the amount of blood cholesterol and the degree of atherosclerosis. Those with low cholesterol had just as much arterial blockage and plaque as those with high cholesterol. Similar studies were subsequently performed in Canada, India, and at other places around the globe, with the same conclusions.

To better understand cholesterol, we need to know the biological workings of this critical substance. There is no such thing as good (HDL) or bad (LDL) cholesterol. That's made up mumbo-jumbo and is an oversimplification of the facts.

High density lipoproteins (HDL) and low density lipoproteins (LDL) are actually proteins that transport cholesterol to and from your tissues. The main job of HDL is to carry cholesterol from the peripheral tissues, including the arteries, to the liver. There it is excreted with the bile or is used to create other substances, including steroid hormones and vitamin D.

The main job of LDL is supporting cholesterol transport from the liver, where most of it is made, to the rest of the body's tissues, including the blood vessel walls. It seems that cholesterol is needed for the production of new cells, and it also repairs damaged cells. There are different sizes of LDL particles, and research is showing that size (and type) really does matter when it comes to LDL!

People who have the smaller, denser type of LDL are at a much greater risk for heart attacks and coronary artery disease. People with fluffier and larger particles of LDL have a much lesser risk of heart problems. Next time you have a blood test, ask your doctor to "type" your LDL, so you know what kind you have. If you have the small, dense LDL particle, changing your diet can help make the dense particles fluffier. Cholesterol-lowering drugs do not change the size of the particles!

Supporters of the lower-your-cholesterol campaign tell us that cholesterol reduction is safe because the side effects from the drugs are rare and mild. But is that true? Not according to cardiologist Duane Graveline, MD. Graveline was prescribed statin Lipitor for his high cholesterol. He developed "transient global ischemia", a type of amnesia from taking Lipitor.

You can find out more on his experience with statins and the experience and research of many other statin-skeptics at www.thincks.org. Statins are also known to cause liver and kidney damage, muscle pain and weakness, numbness and tingling in limbs, joint pain, memory loss and dementia, a shorter lifespan, and cancer. And these effects are termed rare and mild, according to the statin literature! I think most of us would agree that those side effects and risks are not mild. And the frequency of side effects is much more common and widespread than Big Pharma would have us believe.

A new study published in the journal *Atherosclerosis* shows that statin use is associated with a 52% increased prevalence and extent of calcified coronary artery plaque compared to non-statin use. None of the study's participants, 6,673 in all, had any known coronary artery disease prior to the study. Arterial plaque is the hallmark of cardiovascular disease and increases your risk of all-cause mortality. Anything that increases calcification and stiffening of arteries is to be avoided. Statins seem to fall into this category.

Another study published in the journal *Diabetes Care*, discovered that Type 2 diabetics with advanced atherosclerosis, who are frequent statin users have significantly higher levels of coronary artery calcification than less frequent statin users.

So if cholesterol and saturated fat are not causative factors in the development of heart disease, what is? According to cardiologist Frank Sinatra, MD, inflammation is the chief culprit. Inflammation is caused by a number of things. Eating a diet of processed foods and polyunsaturated vegetable oils is clearly one part of the inflammation equation. The only oils that I believe are good for you are olive oil, coconut oil, butter, and ghee. Plus, the other good saturated fats are found in organic and pasture-raised meats eggs, and dairy.

To your continued good health!

David Mortell, R.Ac.

www.pittsburghacupuncturecenter.com

[412 363 0886](tel:4123630886)