Revitalize Your Digestive Health

Certainly, all of us have suffered from an upset stomach in our lives, but more than 95 million Americans suffer from significant 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.

In the western perspective, a balance of digestive acids, enzymes and micro-flora is needed in order to digest the food we eat. Without this balance the food cannot be broken down efficiently, allowing its nutrients to be absorbed and the waste to be eliminated properly. 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. An interesting theory/practice, and one I have used with great success in my practice, is a diet based on the patient's blood type.

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.

Relief for Ulcerative Colitis

Ulcerative colitis is part of a category of diseases called inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), and it presents with inflammation in the lining of the large intestine, specifically the colon and sometimes the rectum. The lining becomes inflamed due to small wounds or ulcers, which then produce mucus and pus. To be more specific, the condition occurs when the body mistakenly identifies food or other substances as foreign invaders. White blood cells are called up as part of an immune response, which proceed to cause inflammation and damage in the large intestine. Flare-ups may be triggered by stress, infections and certain anti-inflammatory drugs such as aspirin or ibuprofen. The exact cause of ulcerative colitis is not known, but medical researchers suspect a link between a person's genetics, general state of the immune system and environmental factors.

Acupuncture and Oriental medicine are equipped to handle the symptoms of ulcerative colitis as demonstrated by a meta-analysis of different scientific studies conducted since the 1990’s. A team of researchers conducted a wide-scale analysis of 43 randomized, controlled trials investigating the efficacy of acupuncture and

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Reduce Your Risk of Getting Sick

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

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.

Acid Reflux? Try Acupuncture!

For some people, eating a heavy, spicy, or fatty meal can produce the unmistakable signs of acid reflux. Symptoms can vary from a burning pain in the chest to a sour taste in the mouth as stomach acid and/or regurgitated food flows
Crohn's disease is a medical condition that can cause chronic inflammation anywhere in the gastrointestinal tract—from the mouth all the way to the rectum. Often, but not always, the inflamed tissue is specifically found in the ileum (the end of the small intestine) and the beginning of the colon. Inflammation can spread into the deeper layers of the tract and frequently has what is known as a “cobblestone appearance.” This refers to the fact that some patches of diseased tissue are found next to patches of healthy tissue.

Although all age groups are equally at risk, people 15-35 years old are most commonly affected. Crohn's is a difficult condition to cure, so the main focus of western medical treatment is to help manage symptoms with medication and dietary changes and, in some cases, surgery to repair or remove affected areas of the gastrointestinal tract. Because the disease is chronic, the individual may experience periods of flare-ups and aggravating symptoms, while at other times the person will have periods with no apparent symptoms at all.

A study called "Acupuncture Helps Crohn's Disease Patients" was published in the journal World of Gastroenterology, and it had some very promising results. It concluded that "acupuncture provided significant therapeutic benefits in patients with active Crohn's disease, beyond the placebo effect and is therefore an effective and safe treatment." Even more encouraging, researchers also discovered that both lab scores and quality of life scores improved. This means that acupuncture and Oriental medicine is adept at handling the physical and emotional symptoms that often accompany the disease.

Do you suffer from irritable bowel syndrome? Contact us today to see how acupuncture and Oriental medicine can improve your quality of life!
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