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Women's Health Issues

Everyone wants to be healthy in order to enjoy a sense of well-being and have the best quality of life possible. Oriental medicine has always addressed the special needs of women throughout their lives. Women are more susceptible than men to certain health conditions, which can make it more challenging to achieve optimal health. Fortunately, many health issues women face respond extremely well to acupuncture treatments.



Some of the top health issues that affect women include:

Heart Disease: According to the American Heart Association cardiovascular disease is the number 1 killer of women, causing 1 in 3 deaths each year and is more deadly than all forms of cancer combined. The AHA also reports that sixty-four percent of women who die suddenly of coronary heart disease had no previous symptoms.

Depression: The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) states that women are twice as likely to experience depression as men and one in eight will contend with major depression during their lifetime. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), depression is the most commonly reported mental health problem among women.

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS): Four times as many women as men develop chronic fatigue syndrome.

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS): Women are 2-6 times more likely to develop IBS. Acupuncture points can help relieve IBS symptoms, according to researchers from the University of York in the U.K., who found that integrating acupuncture into a treatment plan led to less severe symptoms.

Autoimmune Diseases: According to the American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association (AARDA), about 75 percent of autoimmune diseases occur in women. As a group, these diseases make up the fourth-largest cause of health related disability among American women.

Some specific autoimmune diseases that affect women disproportionately more than men include:

Multiple Sclerosis (MS): Nearly half a million Americans have multiple sclerosis, and of that group two-thirds are women. According to the American Academy of Neurology, women with MS are nearly 1.5 times more likely to carry the gene associated with the disease and are more likely to transfer the gene to female offspring.

Lupus: Ninety percent of all lupus patients are female. Lupus has no known cause, though it is believed it may be hereditary, and may also be triggered by stress, environmental toxins, sunlight, exposure to fluorescent light, and some medications.

Celiac Disease: An autoimmune disorder that affects the digestive system due to an adverse reaction to gluten, 60 to 70 percent of celiac disease patients are women. From an acupuncture and Oriental medicine perspective, a health problem is never just in the body or in the mind. Whether an imbalance or disharmony began as a physiological or spiritual issue, ultimately, all aspects of the body are affected.

If you or someone you know are struggling with any of the issues discussed in this newsletter, or you would like to improve your quality of life, contact us today to see how acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help!

Improve Your Heart Health

The cardiovascular system consists of the heart and blood vessels and is responsible for carrying nutrients and oxygen to the tissues and removing carbon dioxide and other waste from them. Diseases affecting the cardiovascular system include arteriosclerosis, coronary artery disease, heart valve disease, arrhythmia, heart failure, hypertension, orthostatic hypotension, shock, endocarditis, diseases of the aorta and its branches, disorders of the peripheral vascular system and congenital heart disease. Symptoms women are more likely to experience include shortness of breath, nausea/vomiting, back or jaw pain, dizziness, lightheadedness or fainting, pain in the lower chest or upper abdomen and extreme fatigue.

By integrating acupuncture and Oriental medicine into a heart-healthy lifestyle, you can reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease by as much as 80 percent. Steps to prevention include managing high blood pressure and cholesterol, eating healthy, maintaining a healthy weight, physical activity, reducing stress, improving sleep quality and smoking cessation--all of which can be helped with acupuncture and Oriental medicine.

Five Steps to a Healthy Heart with Acupuncture

1. Manage High Blood Pressure

High blood pressure makes the heart work harder, increasing its oxygen demands and contributing to angina. This excessive pressure can lead to an enlarged heart (cardiomegaly), as well as damage to blood vessels in the kidneys and brain. It increases the risk of heart attacks, stroke and kidney disease. Acupuncture has been found to be particularly helpful in lowering blood pressure. By applying acupuncture needles at specific sites along the wrist, inside the forearm or in the leg, researchers at the Susan Samueli Center for Integrative Medicine at the University of California, Irvine, were able to stimulate the release of opioids, which decreases the heart's activity and thus its need for oxygen. This, in turn, lowers blood pressure.

2. Maintain a Healthy Weight

Obesity is associated with diabetes, high blood pressure and coronary artery disease--all of which increase the risk of developing heart disease--but studies have shown that excess body weight itself (and not just the associated medical conditions) can also lead to heart failure. Even if you are entirely healthy otherwise, being overweight still places you at a greater risk of developing heart failure. Acupuncture and Oriental medicine are an excellent adjunctive tool when it comes to losing weight. They can help to energize the body, maximize the absorption of nutrients, regulate elimination, control overeating, suppress the appetite and reduce anxiety.

3. Reduce Stress

Stress is a normal part of life, but if left unmanaged, stress can lead to emotional, psychological and, even, physical problems, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, chest pains, or irregular heartbeats. Medical researchers aren't exactly sure how stress increases the risk of heart disease. Stress itself might be a risk factor, or it could be that high levels of stress make other risk factors worse. For example, if you are under stress, your blood pressure goes up, you may overeat, you may exercise less, and you may be more likely to smoke.

Numerous studies have demonstrated the substantial benefits of acupuncture in the treatment of stress,

anxiety and mental health. In addition to acupuncture, Oriental medicine offers a whole gamut of tools and techniques that can be integrated into your life to keep stress in check. These tools include Tui Na, Qi Gong exercises, herbal medicine, dietary therapy, meditations and acupressure that you can administer at home.

4. Improve Sleep Quality

Poor sleep has been linked with high blood pressure, atherosclerosis, heart failure, heart attacks, stroke, diabetes and obesity. Researchers have shown that getting at least eight hours of sleep is needed for good heart-health and getting less than eight hours of sleep can put you at a greater risk for developing heart disease.

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. The acupuncture treatments for problems sleeping focus on the root disharmony within the body that is causing the insomnia. Therefore, those who use acupuncture for insomnia achieve not only better sleep, but also an overall improvement of physical and mental health.

5. If You Smoke, Quit

Most people associate cigarette smoking with breathing problems and lung cancer. But did you know that smoking is also a major cause of coronary artery disease? In fact, about 20 percent of all deaths from heart disease are directly related to cigarette smoking.

Acupuncture has shown to be an effective treatment for smoking. Acupuncture treatments for smoking cessation focus on jitters, cravings, irritability and restlessness--symptoms that people commonly complain about when they quit. It also aids in relaxation and detoxification.

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

Autoimmune Disease Support

Autoimmune diseases are a group of disorders in which the immune system attacks the body and destroys or alters tissues. There are more than 80 serious chronic illnesses in this category, including lupus, multiple sclerosis, celiac disease, and type 1 diabetes. Due to the complexity of treating autoimmune disorders, integrative medicine solutions have received much attention as successful therapies in their treatment. Acupuncture and Oriental medicine are specifically noted for use in pain relief, regulating the immune system, managing symptoms and improving overall quality of life.

Multiple Sclerosis: This is a progressive disease wherein the immune system mistakenly attacks the protective wrapper on nerve cells, known as myelin. As the damage accumulates, the brain and body communicate less well. Individuals may experience symptoms that include a loss of coordination, muscle weakness, numbness and tingling, dizziness, blurred vision, and paralysis.

Because multiple sclerosis can involve an array of symptoms, it is possible that no two patients will share the same underlying pattern. In Oriental medicine, as a whole, patients with MS present either wind or dampness based symptoms. Symptoms with an underlying wind factor arise and abate suddenly, can be quite intense, and jump between different areas of the body. Symptoms with an underlying dampness factor cause swelling and bloating, lead to muscle weakness or a sense of heaviness, and can cause unclear thinking. Oriental medicine may help restore balance, and reduce the frequency and severity of flare-ups.

Electro-acupuncture may help MS patients, according to researchers from University of Campinas, Brazil. Researchers stimulated acupuncture points, noting that patients in the study experienced less pain and depression and greater overall quality of life.

Lupus: Lupus involves an overactive immune system that fights unnecessarily and can injure the skin, joints, organs (heart, kidneys, and lungs), and the brain. Symptoms may include red facial rashes, sore joints, upper abdominal pain when breathing deeply, severe chronic fatigue, memory problems, and scalp

hair loss.

Though every Lupus patient may present differently, Oriental medicine views lupus as a reflection of toxic heat. Good health requires balanced yin and yang, which reflect cold and heat, respectively. While yin and yang both nourish and restrain each other, yang tends to multiply (or worsen) more quickly, whereas yin is slower to change. Having more estrogen than testosterone, women are more yin and vulnerable to yang conditions.

In a small study, researchers from the University of Pittsburgh found that by stimulating acupuncture points along the spine and on the four limbs, patients with lupus experienced less pain. Acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help clear heat and nourish yin. Combined with exercise and reducing stress, these modalities can work double-duty towards improving your overall health and reducing the likelihood of a lupus outbreak.

Celiac Disease: In patients with celiac disease, the small intestine becomes damaged and cannot absorb nutrients efficiently. Celiac disease may also cause fatigue, bone disorders, fertility problems and skin rashes.

Treatment of celiac disease typically revolves around symptom management and dietary changes. Any products known to contain gluten (bread, pasta, processed foods, vitamins, and even cosmetics) may trigger symptoms and should be avoided.

Call today to find out more about how acupuncture and Oriental medicine can be integrated into your wellness plan!

Relief from Irritable Bowel Syndrome

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) involves alternating constipation and diarrhea. Individuals with IBS have a noticeable and sustained increase or decrease in frequency of elimination. Patients may experience pain during stool elimination, cramping, nausea, bloating, gas, headaches and backaches.

Irritable Bowel Syndrome is usually worsened by stress and is considered to be caused by a disharmony between the liver and the spleen meridians. Tension can result in Qi stagnation, irregular Qi flow, uneven physical processes (including bowel movements), unpredictable flare ups, and uncomfortable or irregular bowel movements.



Acupuncture and Oriental medicine support Qi flow throughout the body, ensuring that all physiological and emotional processes run smoothly. For a healthy Qi, women should focus more on caring for themselves and asking for help when they need it.

Treatment focuses on alleviating symptoms and correcting any underlying imbalances through a variety of Oriental medicine techniques that may include acupuncture, stress management, dietary changes and exercise.

Depression Sufferers Can Find Balance

Depression refers to severe and long-lasting 'down' times that impair regular activities. Depression can be caused by a variety of factors, but a family history of depression and severe stress can increase the likelihood of the disease.

According to Harvard University, changing estrogen levels during menstruation, after giving birth, and throughout menopause can provoke mood changes.

Dorree Lynn, Ph.D., a psychologist and author of *Getting Sane Without Going Crazy*, says women "need a connection with others in their lives and without that sustenance, they tend to get depressed."

Qi (energy) enables the body to function in harmony. Because women lose Qi during the menstrual cycle, pregnancy, and childbirth, it is more common for women to be Qi deficient than men.

Acupuncture treatments can correct these imbalances, support the immune system, and directly affect the way your body manages stress and your mental health.

Words can also move Qi, which explains why talk therapy can give patients a sense of physical relief from symptoms. A combination of acupuncture and Oriental medicine may be even more helpful.

According to Beijing University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, researchers have noted greater therapeutic benefits from the use of combined therapies than from the use of independent therapies.

Call today to find out more about how acupuncture and Oriental medicine can be integrated into your emotional wellness plan!

