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Women's Health Concerns and How Acupuncture Can Help

The biggest threats to women's health are often preventable. Oriental medicine has always addressed the special needs of women throughout their lives and many health issues women face respond extremely well to acupuncture treatments. Taking small steps to improve your health can make a difference.

The top health concerns affecting women and how acupuncture can help are:

Cardiovascular Disease

As the number one threat to women's health, cardiovascular disease is not just a man's disease. In women, the condition is responsible for about 29% of deaths, reports the CDC. Although more men die of heart disease than women, females tend to be under diagnosed, often to the point that it's too late to help them once the condition is discovered. By integrating acupuncture and Oriental medicine into your heart healthy lifestyle, you can reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease by as much as eighty percent.

Steps to prevention include managing high blood pressure and cholesterol, quitting smoking, eating healthy, maintaining a healthy weight, physical activity, reducing stress and improved sleep - all of which can be helped with acupuncture and Oriental medicine. 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 have been able to stimulate the release of opioids, which decreases the heart's activity and its need for oxygen. This, in turn, lowers blood pressure.

Cancer

There have been many advances in the early detection and treatment of cancer. While the standard medical care for cancer is effective, the treatments are aggressive and cause numerous unwanted side effects as well as a lowered immune system. The three most common cancers among women are breast, lung and colorectal cancer. While breast cancer is the most common cancer in women it is second in the leading cause of cancer death. Early detection screenings and recommended self examinations should be taken seriously.

Acupuncture has received much attention as an adjunctive therapy in cancer treatments for its use in pain relief, reducing side effects, accelerating recovery and improving overall quality of life.

From a preventive approach Oriental medicine works to restore imbalances in the system with a variety of treatment modalities including acupuncture, herbal therapy, tui na, qi gong in addition to food, exercise and lifestyle suggestions. Seasonal acupuncture treatments just four times a year serve to tonify the inner organ systems and correct minor annoyances before they become serious problems.

Osteoporosis

Characterized by a decrease in bone mass and an increased likelihood of fractures osteoporosis is not simply a calcium deficiency. As a complex living tissue, bone is made of many different components and is influenced by many variables including the body's use of calcium from the bone to balance pH levels in the blood. Osteoporosis threatens 44 million Americans, of which 68% are women, reports the National Osteoporosis Foundation.



"Osteoporosis is largely preventable," says Mark. "The behaviors that women develop in their childhood, in their adolescence, and in their early adult years really play a significant role in the development of the disease." That's because bodies build up most of bone mass until age 30. Then new bone stops forming and the focus switches to the maintenance of old bone.

Acupuncture and Oriental medicine coupled with a healthy lifestyle and regular exercise, have much to offer in improving the quality of life for those who suffer from bone and joint problems.

Depression

Depressive disorders affect 10%-25% of women at some point in their lives. The body's immune system is compromised and symptoms reduce functioning, impair work performance and social relationships. Common symptoms of depressive disorders include: a decreased interest in most activities, insomnia, fatigue, and feeling empty and worthless. At its worst, hopelessness sets in and suicide becomes a desperate option for approximately 15% of people who suffer from severe depressive disorders.

Oriental medicine does not view people as a collection of segmented parts to be treated independently but rather addresses the link between the body, spirit and mind. The goal of Oriental medicine is to bring all the human systems into a healthy balance, insuring that both the mind and body feel well and when used in conjunction with psychotherapy acupuncture has a positive and holistic effect on depressed patients. If you suffer from depression, consider acupuncture therapy in conjunction with your treatment plan to regain peace of mind, regulate your immune system and stay healthy.

Autoimmune Diseases

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, and type 1 diabetes.

According to the American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association (AARDA), about 75% of autoimmune diseases occur in women. Individually, each disease appears uncommon with the exception of diabetes, thyroid disease, and lupus however as a group, the disorders make up the fourth-largest cause of disability among American women.

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.

Menopause and Gynecological Health

Gynecological conditions including Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS), fibroids, endometriosis, and infertility along with menopause are some of the most successfully treated problems by acupuncture and Oriental medicine. Oriental medicine has long recognized that health and vitality can be sustained over a woman's lifetime by restoring balance within the body and supporting the natural production of essential hormones.

Menopause is a transitional period marking the cessation of ovulation in a woman's body. Symptoms vary from mild to severe, and are brought on as our bodies try to adapt to decreasing amounts of estrogen. Symptoms can include hot flashes, night sweats, insomnia, fatigue, mood swings, memory loss, dryness, headaches, joint pain, and weight gain. Menopause patients are encouraged to maintain a healthy weight, stabilize blood sugar, and eliminate stress, tension and anxiety or learn new techniques to cope with them to diminish the effects they have.

Oriental medicine does not recognize menopause as one particular syndrome and aims to treat the specific symptoms that are unique to each individual using a variety of techniques such as acupuncture, herbs, bodywork, lifestyle/dietary recommendations and energetic exercises to restore imbalances found in the body. Therefore, if 10 women are treated each will receive a unique, customized treatment with different acupuncture points, different herbs and different lifestyle and diet recommendations.

With support from Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine along with small changes in lifestyle and diet, menopause can be a time of a revival of vital energy and an opportunity for personal growth

To learn more about how acupuncture and Oriental medicine can improve your health and well being call for a consultation today!

Heart Healthy Foods

Cruciferous Vegetables

Cruciferous vegetables such as kale, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, and cabbage are a gold mine of antioxidants and other heart-saving phytochemicals.

Fish

Fatty fish such as salmon and anchovies are loaded with omega-3 fatty acids that will help your heart maintain a steady rhythm. Having even one fish serving a week could reduce your risk of death from a heart attack by fifty two percent.



Flaxseed

Flaxseed is one of the most potent sources of heart health-promoting omega-3 fats. Studies indicate that adding flaxseed to your diet can reduce the development of heart disease by forty six percent while helping keep red blood cells from clumping together and forming clots that can block arteries. Sprinkle 2 Tbsp flaxseed a day on your cereal or salad.

Fruit

Oranges contain folic acid that helps lower levels of homocysteine, a heart attack risk factor. Grapes are loaded with flavonoids and resveratrol, both potent antioxidants that may discourage red blood cells from clumping together and forming an artery-blocking clot. Pomegranate juice is chock-full of potassium and polyphenols, which promote heart health and have been shown to help lower cholesterol.

Garlic

Just one clove a day, or 300 mg three times daily, reduces the risk of heart attack at least three ways: It discourages red blood cells from sticking together and blocking your arteries, it reduces arterial damage, and it discourages cholesterol from lining the arteries and making them so narrow that blockages are likely.

Green Tea

Green tea contains several powerful antioxidants that reduce bad cholesterol and boost good cholesterol, improving an individuals overall cholesterol levels. Drinking green tea also seems to enhance cardiovascular health by improving the consistency of platelets in the blood and may even lower blood pressure.

Nuts

Studies have found that those who eat more than 5 oz of nuts a week are one-third less likely to have either heart disease or a heart attack. Just don't overdo it as nuts can pile on the pounds.

Red Wine

Scientific studies overwhelmingly show that a daily glass of wine can reduce your risk of a heart attack. Both plant compounds called saponins and antioxidants in the 'fruit of the vine' work to protect arteries. Researchers have found that red is much more effective than white for improving heart health.