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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.

Several conditions that impact women more frequently than men include:

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:

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!

Living Well with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

When we are unable to do our basic daily activities, we may need more rest. For those with chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), rest doesn't help. Sufferers may feel tired for more than six months, experience reduced memory, insomnia or a wide range of other symptoms, including but not limited to, headaches, flu-like symptoms and chronic pain. Contributing factors can include severe stress or trauma, a history of infection and exposure to toxins.

From an acupuncture and Oriental medicine perspective, CFS reflects a disharmony. When we are out of balance, we may experience digestive upset, unclear thinking, habitual fatigue, muscle weakness or discomfort, and insufficient elimination. At the University of Hong Kong, researchers included acupuncture points in a protocol for patients diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome. Patients who received acupuncture

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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

experienced less physical and mental fatigue.

Oriental medicine can help relieve many of your symptoms because it is exceptional for relieving aches and pains, helping to avoid getting sick as often, recovering more quickly, and improving vitality and stamina.

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.

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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!
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

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variety of Oriental medicine techniques that may include acupuncture, stress management, dietary changes and exercise.