

Treating Irritability and Moodiness with Acupuncture

Everyone suffers from irritability and moodiness from time to time, but if you find that a short temper and frustration are becoming a constant issue for you, then acupuncture may be able to help.



Often irritability and moodiness are the consequence of chronic stress in your life. Over time these emotions can progress into more serious emotional conditions such as anxiety and depression as well as other health conditions such as digestive problems, trouble sleeping and the tendency to get sick more frequently.

Liver Qi Stagnation and Emotions

Within Oriental medicine emotional disorders can be associated with a number of different patterns of disharmony; however, anger, irritability, and frustration are all signs that our qi is not flowing smoothly. The liver is responsible for the smooth flow of qi (life force) throughout the body and for smoothing our emotions. When the liver's function of moving qi is disrupted, qi can become stuck. This is referred to as liver qi stagnation.

Liver qi stagnation is one of the most common patterns of disharmony seen in today's patients. In addition to irritability and moodiness, signs and symptoms may include distending pain in the area below the ribs, stuffiness of the chest, sighing, abdominal distention, nausea, sour regurgitation, belching, diarrhea or constipation, feeling of a lump in the throat, irregular periods, painful periods and distention of the breasts prior to periods. Liver qi stagnation is commonly associated with PMS.

Acupuncture is excellent at relieving liver qi stagnation. Treatment for irritability and moodiness associated with liver qi stagnation focuses on moving qi and supporting the liver and spleen organ systems with acupuncture, lifestyle and dietary recommendations and perhaps an herbal formula.

Move Your Qi

The liver is responsible for the smooth flowing of Qi (life force) throughout the body. When the liver functions smoothly, physical and emotional activity throughout the body also runs smoothly. So, for optimum health, move your Qi!

Stretch - The liver controls the tendons. According to Oriental medicine, the liver stores blood during periods of rest and then releases it to the tendons in times of activity,

maintaining tendon health and flexibility. Incorporate a morning stretch into your routine. Try yoga or Tai qi.

Eye Exercises - The liver opens into the eyes. Although all the organs have some connection to the health of the eyes, the liver is connected to proper eye function. Remember to take breaks when looking at a computer monitor for extended periods of time and do eye exercises.

Eat Green - Green is the color of the liver. Eating young plants - fresh, leafy greens, sprouts, and immature cereal grasses - can improve the liver's overall functions and aid in the movement of qi.

Try Something Sour - Foods and drinks with sour tastes are thought to stimulate the liver's qi. Put lemon slices in your drinking water, use vinegar and olive oil for your salad dressing and garnish your sandwich with a slice of dill pickle.

Do More Outdoor Activities - Outside air helps liver qi flow. If you have been feeling irritable, find an outdoor activity to smooth out that liver qi stagnation. Try hiking or take up golf.

Enjoy Milk Thistle Tea - Milk thistle helps protect liver cells from incoming toxins and encourages the liver to cleanse itself of damaging substances, such as alcohol, medications, pesticides, environmental toxins, and even heavy metals such as mercury.

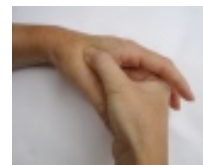
Get Acupuncture Treatments - Acupuncture and Oriental medicine can help improve the overall health of your liver as well as treat stress, anger and frustration, which are often associated with liver qi disharmony.

Periodic acupuncture treatments can serve to tonify the inner organ systems and can correct minor annoyances before they become serious problems.

The Four Gates Treatment for Moving Qi

A popular treatment for the stress, anger, and frustration associated with liver qi stagnation is known as the "Four Gates." The four gates are the right and left side acupuncture points Liver 3 (Taichong) and Large Intestine 4 (Hegu). Together these four acupuncture points enhance the circulation of qi and blood throughout the body and have a calming and analgesic effect. They are also used to alleviate pain.

Large Intestine 4 is located on the padded area of your hand between the thumb and index finger, between the first and second metacarpal bones. Massage this point with your thumb on both



hands for approximately 30 seconds.

Liver 3 is located in a hollow on the top of your foot below the gap between your big toe and the next toe, between the 1st and 2nd metatarsal bones. To stimulate this point, place your right heel in the juncture between the bones that attach to the large and second toes and gently knead the point for approximately thirty seconds. Then switch sides to stimulate liver 3 on your other foot.

Signs and Symptoms of Liver Qi Stagnation

Here are some of the symptoms commonly associated with liver qi stagnation:

- * Pain or discomfort anywhere along the sides of the body
- * Depression
- * Mood swings
- * Sighing
- * Hiccups
- * Frustration
- * Inappropriate anger
- * Sensation of a lump in throat
- * Difficulty swallowing
- * Bitter taste in mouth
- * Constipation or diarrhea
- * Abdominal distention and discomfort
- * Stomachache that improves after massage
- * Stomachache that worsens with anger
- * PMS with irritability or swollen breasts
- * Irregular or painful periods
- * Poor appetite
- * Churning sensation in stomach.