

TRADITIONAL
CHINESE
MEDICINE
HEALING CENTER

Bill Biao Lu, O.M.D., L.Ac.
Shiaoting Jing, O.M.D., L.Ac.
Florence Lim, Dipl. O.M., L.Ac.

12304 Santa Monica Blvd.
Suite 120
Los Angeles, CA 90025

Phone: (310) 826-5288
Fax: (310) 826-7178
Email:

contact@tcmhealingcenter.com

www.tcmhealingcenter.com



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Got Qi?

Spring 2011

Irritable Bowel Syndrome

By Florence Lim, L.Ac., Dipl. O.M.

Irritable bowel syndrome, also referred to as IBS, is a functional condition characterized by one or more of the following symptoms:

- **Diarrhea**
- **Constipation**
- **Alternating diarrhea and constipation**
- **Abdominal cramping and pain**
- **Intestinal gas and bloating.**



Although no real structural damage can be detected by the naked eye, there is, in fact, significant physical discomfort which can negatively impact a person's everyday life. Not only does IBS cause pain and irregular bowel movements, but it also affects the production of serotonin, the body's feel-good chemical, which is actually produced and found in the intestines. People with IBS also tend to suffer from other conditions such as PMS, fibromyalgia, painful periods, and chronic pelvic pain. Clinically, we have found a strong correlation between gastrointestinal issues and the presence of pelvic inflammatory disease, chronic yeast or urinary tract infections, endometriosis, and other gynecological issues. For instance, three warning signs for the possible presence of ovarian cancer include: 1) abdominal pain, abdominal mass, and/or abdominal swelling, 2) being a female between the ages of 40-60 years old, and 3) having a history of chronic constipation followed by chronic diarrhea. By treating gastrointestinal issues through the use of herbs and acupuncture, we can actually influence activity at a cellular level to prevent inflammation, prevent cancer, and subsequently alleviate a women's gynecological issues.

So what causes irritable bowel syndrome? Although the exact cause is unknown, there are several plausible explanations and triggers for IBS:

- **Chronic, low-grade inflammation of the gastrointestinal tract after an acute bout of bacterial or parasitic infection of the intestines.** Once inflammation is present, this can also damage the nerves in the gut lining and alter the way the digestive nervous system functions.
- **Brain-bowel chemical imbalance.** We are always telling our patients that their digestive systems are like their second brain! And there is, in fact, truth to this. The brain and gut are intimately connected via the nervous system and by neurotransmitter chemicals such as serotonin and norepinephrine. That is why **stress** can often bring about or exacerbate symptoms of IBS.
- **Food allergies and sensitivities**
- **The use of antibiotics.** These medications kill off both good and bad bacteria within the intestines, leading to an overgrowth of yeast that can eventually circulate into the bloodstream. Gas and bloating can result.
- **Candidiasis**

IBS is often mistaken for other conditions such as gluten intolerance (Celiac disease) and/or wheat and dairy allergies or sensitivities. It is also important to distinguish IBS from other more serious inflammatory bowel issues such as Crohn's disease or Ulcerative Colitis, which require more long-term treatment and different herbal prescriptions. If you have more questions about learning to distinguish between IBS and other bowel issues, please ask our licensed practitioners at TCM Healing Center for more information.

What is IBS from a TCM Perspective?

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), the specific diagnosis of "Irritable Bowel Syndrome" does not exist. Rather, we treat patients according to their presenting pattern of symptoms rather than giving the same pre-made formula for all IBS sufferers. One patient's constitutional type and symptoms may be completely different from another patient who also has IBS. For those with chronic diarrhea, for example, the underlying

Cont'd on Page 2



Welcome to the World!

Congratulations Expecting Mothers!

Leslie B.
Aliza D.
Anneli S.
Natalie M.
Lucia T.
Victoria P.
Allison R.
Michelle S.
Debbie H.
Monica P.
Brooke F.
Candice M.
Lisa R.

Maximus



Born to Alessandra & Jesse
On September 26, 2010
8 lbs. 13 oz., 21 inches

Jordan



Born to Joanna & Jonathan
On September 15, 2010
7 lbs. 4 oz., 19 inches

Macie



Born to Meredith & Jonathan
On February 23, 2011
7 lbs. 4 oz., 21.5 inches

Nathan



Born to Margaret & Vincent
On March 14, 2011
6 lbs. 11 oz., 19 inches

Lea Rose



Born to Liraz & Ori
On December 23, 2010
6.9 lbs, 19.6 inches

Koa



Born to Haruko & Gordon
On December 14, 2010
6 lbs 12 oz., 20 inches



To the mind that is still, the whole universe surrenders.

Lao Tzu, Chinese Taoist Philosopher and founder of Taoism,
author of "Tao Te Ching" (Book of the Way), 600 BC–531 BC



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pathology is Spleen deficiency with Dampness or Damp Heat toxin. The Spleen and Stomach system can be compared to the western medicine concept of the digestive system. Dampness or Damp Heat toxin to the Spleen and Stomach system can damage the integrity of the intestinal walls, leading to a malabsorption of vital nutrients and the entering of toxic chemicals into the bloodstream through the gut walls. When the Spleen Qi becomes damaged by stress, overwork, overthinking, and poor diet and eating habits, this can wreak havoc on the entire system, resulting in fatigue, weight problems, an under-functioning or hypersensitive immune system, respiratory issues, hormonal issues, gynecological issues, and IBS. The health of the Spleen and digestive system, therefore, has a tremendous impact on your overall health.

Constipation is another uncomfortable symptom experienced by many who suffer from IBS. Like diarrhea, constipation can also manifest in various ways. There is constipation due to excess heat in the system, which may cause hard, pebbly stools; constipation due to Qi stagnation, which can cause significant bloating; constipation due to Qi or Blood deficiency; and constipation due to Yin or Yang deficiency.

As experienced practitioners of Traditional Chinese Medicine, we are able to create specialized dietary recommendations, herbal formulas, and acupuncture treatment protocols based on a comprehensive patient intake that includes tongue and pulse diagnosis, palpation, and questions aimed at uncovering the root cause of the disease as well as other systemic issues that need to be dealt with simultaneously. For some patients, an elimination diet of potential IBS-causing foods may be necessary (see next section).

Cont'd on Page 3

Cont'd from Page 2**What types of foods can trigger IBS symptoms?**

Each individual reacts differently to various types of foods, so it is important to discover the particular foods which may be triggering your own symptoms of IBS. Possible triggers include:

- Alcohol, Coffee, and Dairy
- Food additives and all diet products with aspartame
- Fruit and certain types of nuts and seeds
- Sugar and High fructose corn syrup
- Processed Foods
- Spicy Foods
- Wheat

Long-term intake of these types of foods will result not only in chronic local inflammation of the digestive tract, but also more systemic inflammation such as arthritis, cardiovascular disease, cancer (which is now thought of as a possible result of chronic inflammation), and all the issues mentioned earlier in the previous sections.

**How do herbs and acupuncture help with IBS?**

The herbal formulas we prescribe at our clinic work at a cellular level to regulate the functions of the entire digestive system. From a TCM perspective, these herbs help to tonify Spleen Qi to get rid of damp-heat in the Stomach and Spleen systems, as well as spread and regulate Liver Qi to relieve bloating, pain, and stress. The body is like a mini-universe, and the Spleen is like the central hub, or life force, of this universe from which everything depends on for sustenance. By regulating and strengthening the Spleen and Stomach system, therefore, other issues such as chronic fatigue, headaches, hormonal imbalance, and pelvic inflammatory disorders can often resolve on their own. From a western perspective, our herbal formulas help to reduce inflammation and regulate the function of the gastrointestinal tract. The herbs also exhibit anti-bacterial properties and have been known to have beneficial effects in the treatment of gastric ulcers and bacterial dysentery. Weekly acupuncture treatments are recommended to rebalance the body's energy, improve homeostasis, and increase the body's own ability to heal. As stress can often be a trigger for IBS as well as a host of other illnesses, acupuncture is an excellent way of de-stressing and allowing yourself a time slot during the week where you can simply relax and focus on the intention to heal.

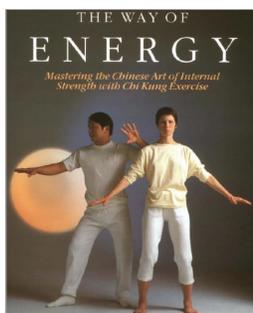
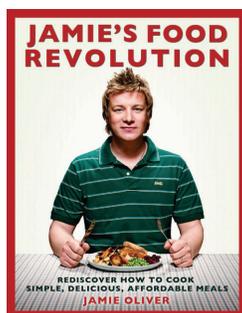
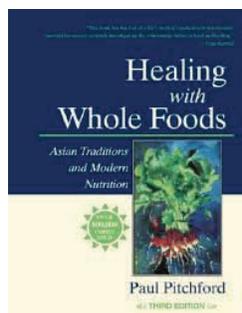
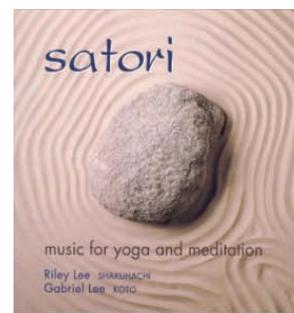
There are several things you can do in the meantime to help alleviate the symptoms of IBS. These include:

Exercise. We all know of the many benefits gained from regular exercise! Besides increasing endorphins, improving blood flow, and reducing stress, exercise also helps to balance serotonin, our body's natural feel-good chemical, in the gut!

Eliminate. Eliminate, or at least minimize, foods which you are aware of that can bring about your IBS symptoms. Also, eliminate disease-causing bacteria, yeast, and viruses in the gastrointestinal tract by regularly drinking your prescribed herbal teas and eating a well-balanced, healthy diet. Please talk to our acupuncturists for more information on diet.

Replace. Replace the sugar- and yeast-loving bacteria in your gut with beneficial bacteria called probiotics, which can be found in plain, unsweetened yogurt, kefir, or in capsule and powder form. When choosing a supplement, look for those containing probiotic doses in the *billions* of cells.

Heal. Fill your thoughts and your surroundings with people and things that heal and help you relax. Heal and restore the lining of your intestinal wall through the use of herbs and proper nutrition.

Featured Books, CDs, and DVDs**Master Lam Kam-Chuen****Jamie Oliver****Paul Pitchford****Riley Lee
Gabriel Lee**



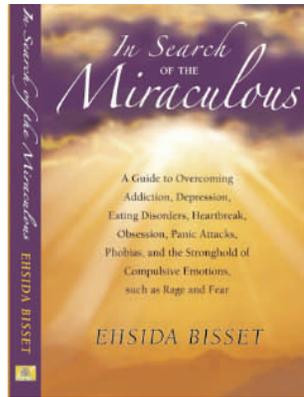
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Spring Smiles

By Ehsida Bisset
www.aummm.com

As the seasons change, so do our bodies and our needs. Spring is the time when our liver requires the most support. When the liver is healthy and strong, it will supply the body and soul with kindness, self-expansion, and confidence. When the liver is exhausted and over-worked, we are likely to feel more anger, frustration or aggressiveness. Most people do not regard negative emotions as sickness or imbalance in the body, but this is how they begin. A healthy, vibrant, balanced body sees through happy eyes.

In the Taoist tradition, upon awakening, practitioners open their hearts before they open their eyes. By acknowledging and appreciating the heart, it begins to blossom and shower the organs, bones and glands with love and happiness; nourishing them with the essence they thrive on most.

Following in the footsteps of these masters, we can open our hearts each morning and smile down through the organs, appreciating them for all the work they do. Spend a little extra time smiling at the liver, and you will feel it relax and cool down. Smile through the whole body, as the organs work in synchronicity, and you will quickly feel your life force increasing.

If your liver is already over-worked and you find yourself facing anger daily, there is still hope. Anger is a very potent emotion, and e-motions are simply energy in motion. We can use this energy any way we want. That same energy that you dread may be directed inside to burn extra fat cells, make your hair grow faster, quicken your metabolism or heal a wound. Use your intention to direct the energy and you have a powerful tool that will help instead of harm.

As you practice re-directing the energy and smiling inside to all your organs and cells, your personality and health will continue to transform. Be playful and imaginative like a child, and the world will once again offer you extraordinary beauty and wonderment as far as your smiling eyes can see.



For more information on Ehsida Bisset or her book, "In Search of the Miraculous," go to www.aummm.com or contact us at contact@tcmhealingcenter.com

Easy-To-Make, Qi Moving Daikon Salad

This pungent salad is great for those who suffer from indigestion, a wet, phlegmy cough, or for those who are trying to quit smoking. It helps to move stagnant qi, counteract food stagnation, and clear phlegm from the Lungs. The carrots can be substituted with dried orange peel soaked in water for 15 minutes for those who have a noticeable phlegmy cough or are trying to quit smoking.

Ingredients

- 1 cup daikon (white radish), cut into match-stick pieces
- 1 small carrot, cut into match-stick pieces (or dried orange peel)
- 3 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon honey or other natural sweetener (optional)
- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- Salt

Directions

1. Toss the daikon and carrot together in a serving bowl.
2. In a separate small bowl, combine the vinegar with the honey/sweetener and stir. (You may briefly heat the vinegar in a small pot to help the sweetener dissolve). You can also just use the vinegar by itself.
3. Pour the vinegar mixture and sesame oil over the vegetables and mix well. Season with salt to taste.
4. Let the mixture marinate for 20 to 30 minutes. (This serves as a way of semi-cooking the raw vegetables.) Serve!

Variations

If you want to soften the vegetables a bit, you can first salt the julienned daikon and carrots and let them sit for 10 minutes, then rinse them before marinating the vegetables in the vinegar. This may make the salad a bit saltier, however. You can keep make a bigger batch and keep salad in the refrigerator for up to a week.