



Conquering Chronic Health Problems Without Drugs or Surgery

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Introduction

I have learned from personal experience that a weak liver can be the cause of many *chronic* health problems. Gallbladder problems, bad breath, constant fatigue, sleep disorders, heart palpitations, poor memory, skin problems, poor complexion, allergies, arthritis, thyroid problems, frequent numbness in the extremities, frequent infection and fainting are a few examples of what may result when the liver is stressed. In addition, women's health problems such as uterine fibroids, ovarian cysts, breast cysts, endometriosis and painful menstruation may also be the result of weak liver.

Having suffered from these disorders for more than two decades, I sought help from both medical doctors and traditional Chinese medicine practitioners but my problems persisted. Western medicine did not offer much help to me in addressing chronic health problems and traditional Chinese medicine lacks an understanding of hormones. I have B.Sc. and M.Sc. degrees in chemistry and had worked for more than 6 years in the chemistry laboratory of a large hospital in Toronto, Canada. I also have strong personal interest reinforced by family tradition in Chinese herbal medicine. I decided to treat myself with both Chinese and Western approaches, using one to complement the other. Through a combination of Chinese herbs, diet control and regular exercise, I gradually overcame most of these health problems. I would like to share my experience with others who may have similar chronic health problems. The herbs I used in treating myself are described in Properties of Herbs. All herbal tinctures I developed are manufactured by and available exclusively from Prime Health Products.

Note of Apology: I get a lot of emails and cannot answer all of them promptly. Please expect normal delays of a week or longer in my reply. For faster response, please phone me (416-248-2930, 10 am to 5 pm, EST, Canada). I sincerely apologize for this.

My Journey of Self-Healing

Liver functions, liver disease, and liver cleanse – constant fatigue, age-related vision and memory loss – page 1

Gallstone and kidney stone - Gallstone removal, kidney stone removal – page 5

Gallbladder flushing - Gallstone treatment: gallbladder surgery alternatives; problems with gallbladder removed – page 7

Estrogen dominance - Womens' problems, amenorrhea, menopause, womens' weight problems – page 12

Endometriosis - Symptoms and treatment; relation to liver health – page 15

Infertility - Hormone imbalance and Chinese herbs – page 19

Insomnia - Sleep disorders and depression – page 20

Other liver-related problems - Allergies, arthritis, auto-immune diseases, thyroid disorders, skin problems, and mens' prostate problems – page 21

Halitosis - Bad breath, gum diseases, gum surgery, plaque, gingivitis and sensitive teeth – page 23

1. Liver functions, liver disease, and liver cleanse

Constant fatigue, age-related vision and memory loss

The liver is our body's most important organ after the heart, performing many important functions including metabolism, detoxification, and formation of important compounds including blood clotting factors. It also filters, regulates, and stores blood. Stress, poor diet, and over-medication are common problems in our "civilized" lifestyle. These may lead to stress and functional damage to the liver. As a result, "sluggish" liver has become a common ailment. It may affect memory, sleep, thyroid, body weight, and other body functions.

Both estrogen and androgen stimulate cell division. Elevated levels of these hormones may lead to abnormal cell growth such as womens' uterine fibroids, ovarian cysts, endometriosis, breast cysts, and breast cancer or mens' prostate enlargement and prostate

cancer. Since the liver is the principal organ which removes these hormones, its failure to remove them efficiently often leads to their accumulation in the body and is a major cause of the above diseases.

It has been known for thousands of years in China that liver problems are the source of many ailments. However, hormonal imbalances are still little understood in Chinese medicine. As a result, most women's problems are treated for blood and energy stagnation. "Blood moving" herbs such as Don Qui, licorice, and ginseng are frequently used for reducing stagnation and stimulating circulation without realizing their effect on estrogen levels. These herbs may initially help improve circulation, but the elevated estrogen levels can eventually make the problem worse.

Liver functions

The liver is the most important organ after the heart. It performs hundreds of functions including:

1. *Circulation*: transfer of blood from portal to systemic circulation, activity of the liver's reticulo-endothelial system (kupffer cells) in the immune system. The liver stores and regulates the blood and is responsible for nourishing every cell in our body. Every part of the body depends on blood from the liver for nourishment and sustenance.
2. *Excretion*: formation and secretion of bile for digestion and cleansing of blood; removal of ammonia from blood; excretion of substances filtered from the blood by the liver such as heavy metals or dyes.
3. *Metabolism*: carbohydrate, protein, lipid (fat), mineral and vitamin metabolism; manufacturing and storage of many nutrients such as glucose and vitamins; production of heat through metabolism.
4. *Protection and detoxification*: removal of foreign bodies from the blood (phagocytosis); detoxification by conjugation, methylation, oxidation and reduction.
5. *Production*; formation of urea, serum albumin, glycogen and blood coagulating proteins such as prothrombin, fibrinogen and heparin; erythrocyte (red blood cells) destruction.
6. *Regulation of hormones*: inactivation and elimination of hormones through the bile or urine. Since estrogen and androgen are both growth hormones which stimulate cell division, elevation of their levels in the blood due to the liver's failure to remove them efficiently can cause their accumulation in tissue. This in turn may lead to abnormal growths such as uterine fibroids, ovarian cysts, endometriosis, breast cysts and breast cancer, prostate enlargement or prostate cancer. Excessive estrogen is also the most common cause of painful menstruations.

The liver also regulates body functions which affect emotional and mental activities. In a diseased condition, the liver's blood storage and regulatory functions are affected, and bleeding or clots can result. When liver blood is deficient, nourishment to tendons and blood vessels is curtailed, the joints become stiff, and muscles become spasmodic and numb. Blood deficiency in the liver may even lead to stroke, dizziness, headaches, tinnitus, deafness, fainting or convulsion. When the liver blood is so deficient that it cannot nourish the eyes, night blindness or blurring may result. If the liver is affected by stress or unhappy feelings, its vitality may be repressed and the sides hurt, and hiccups or hernia may develop. The bowels may become constipated and sleep may be disturbed causing nightmare or insomnia [2].

The liver is the most emotion sensitive organ and its weakness is often connected to emotional sensitivity. Individuals who are emotionally sensitive are more prone to weak liver even if they do not have a poor diet or are not taking medication regularly.

"Liver causes heart attacks" (Reference 3)

The structural position of the liver as a bridge between the returning blood from the digestive system and the lower part of the body to the heart makes the liver an important organ for the health of the heart. A weakened and swollen or congested liver can obstruct the venous blood flow to the heart causing heart palpitations or even heart attacks (see reference 3). In other words a healthy liver is essential for maintaining an adequate amount of blood flow to the heart and the heart can only pump the blood it receives.

Age-related vision and memory loss: the importance of the liver

According to the Chinese, the liver and kidneys are the organs that "age" us. That is why almost all longevity herbs used in Chinese medicine are liver and kidney tonics. Without a clean, efficient liver and healthy kidneys, blood is not filtered clean. "Dirty" blood, loaded with toxins or waste products, is heavier and more sluggish. This causes poor circulation and reduced capacity to carry oxygen and nutrients. As a result, tissue and organ cells are undernourished. If this condition persists the cells will deteriorate and inevitably age. The eye and brain cells are especially affected because the blood has to flow against gravity to reach them. In an article on Alzheimer disease in the January 1988 issue of the Mayo Clinic Health Letter, malfunction of the liver and kidneys was mentioned as one of the causes leading to Alzheimer disease. Brain tumour, which physically blocks blood flow to the brain, was also cited as one of the causes.

The brain is only 2% of our body weight, yet it needs 20% of our oxygen supply. If the toxin-loaded blood from a weak liver has limited capacity to carry oxygen, the brain cells are affected most.

I was born with a photographic memory, but I lost it at the age of 17. Up to the age of 16, I could remember every single word in textbooks that I glanced through just once. I was surprised to learn that I could not do that any more before I finished my high school. Looking back, my very stressful childhood must have congested my liver and my inadequately filtered blood had difficulty flowing up to my brain to nourish my cells. The fact that I fainted in school at the age of 11 indicated that my blood flow to my brain was already sluggish even at an early age. As the years went by with stressful life, my memory kept going down hill and reached the bottom at age 47, the year that I was diagnosed with badly congested liver. When I cleansed out my liver and gallbladder, changed my diet and started doing daily morning exercise, my memory improved. I don't think I will get my photographic memory back, but I did gain back some of my memory power and stopped its deterioration.

Constant Fatigue

When blood is loaded with toxins due to a weak and inefficient liver, there is limited capacity for the blood to carry oxygen and nutrients which are necessary for energy production. The result is constant fatigue. A clean and efficient liver which produces cleaner blood would help energy production because clean blood can carry more oxygen and nutrients.

Liver problems: liver congestion and stagnation

Liver congestion and stagnation are common liver problems. Yet conventional medicine does not understand them and has no test to detect them. In hepatitis or liver inflammation, liver enzyme levels in the blood are elevated because of the ruptured liver cells which contain high contents of liver enzymes. However, in liver congestion or stagnation, liver cells are still intact and liver enzyme levels in blood are normal. Therefore normal clinical tests which rely on liver enzyme levels as a measure of liver condition cannot detect liver congestion or stagnation.

I had blood tests performed a few months before I was diagnosed with badly congested liver by a traditional Chinese medicine practitioner. These tests showed no abnormal liver condition because they simply could not detect liver congestion. I never knew I had liver problems until the Chinese doctor correctly diagnosed my congested liver condition. This was the turning point for my health problems. When my liver became healthy again through a lengthy journey of self-healing (see *Liver cleansing* section below), most of my chronic health problems disappeared.

According to Chinese medicine, all internal organs work as a team in the body; the liver is considered the "General" or "Chief of Staff". Unfortunately, many of our modern prescription drugs are damaging to the liver or kidneys. Over the counter drugs such as painkillers can also cause liver toxicity. Therefore it is not surprising that many people over the age of 50 develop liver weakness or toxicity. Even among healthy people who are not dependent on drugs, the liver has been filtering blood day and night throughout life without being "cleansed". Over the years, circulating blood has deteriorated in quality which goes unnoticed. The end result is often a feeling of sluggishness and heaviness due to poor circulation. Studies linking liver damage to excessive or long-term use of painkillers have been reported.

I come from a family with weak livers. My father died of a stroke at the age of 59. It was very likely related to liver problems as he had been diagnosed as having a weak liver. My uncle became quite sick at the age of 67. His extremities were dark in colour due to poor blood supply and he was very tired and weak. He went to see a western medical doctor and was told that he was beyond help and would not live much longer. He decided to seek a second opinion from a traditional Chinese medical doctor who prescribed a liver cleansing herb (Chinese Gentian) which purges the liver. He is now over 80 and is still healthy.

Weakening of the liver and eventual toxicity are usually slow processes. In many cases the only sign of liver weakness is poor digestion and low energy level. Most people pass this off as something that happens with age. As a result they do little or nothing about it until it is too late. Fortunately, nature has endowed our liver with excellent regenerative powers. If we are able to understand the early signs of degeneration, we have an excellent chance of restoring it to optimal functioning with proper care.

Liver cleansing

The liver is the most important organ for hormone regulation. Because of my weak liver, I had severe hormone imbalance resulting in many "women's problems". Although the Chinese medicine practitioner correctly diagnosed my congested liver condition, his treatment actually made my problems worse! He prescribed several herbs including Dong Quei, licorice and ginseng which contain plant estrogens. Although these had beneficial effects initially because they improved my blood circulation, the plant estrogens eventually aggravated my hormone imbalance problems. I realized Chinese medicine does not understand hormones and conventional medicine also offers no help for my chronic liver congestion problems. I therefore

decided to treat myself, using my combined knowledge of clinical chemistry and Chinese herbs.

At first I tried several commonly used liver cleansing herbs such as dandelion, chrysanthemum and Swedish Bitters. Dandelion and chrysanthemum were too weak. Swedish Bitters helped for about 3 weeks but my condition became actually worse because there are 3 herbs in it which contain plant estrogens. I searched Chinese herbal medicine literature (including some ancient Chinese texts) on liver remedies. Several herbs are mentioned as beneficial to the liver including *Coptis*, *Gentian*, *Self-Heal* and *Scutellaria*. *Chinese Gentian (Lung-tan Tsao)* has been known for thousands of years to be useful in the treatment of fever, rheumatism and general debility. It is also said to benefit the liver, aid digestion, strengthen the memory and give lightness and elasticity to the body. It is primarily used in the treatment of acute hepatitis, acute conjunctivitis, acute tonsillitis, jaundice and most liver disorders (Ref. 2, 5). It is also helpful in alleviating "sluggish liver" which can be caused by hormone therapy, medications or other problems such as stress or poor diets.

I recalled my uncle's very positive experience with the herb *Chinese Gentian* and decided to try it. From my research, I knew that the Chinese herb *Bupleurum* increases "energy flow" in the liver. I decided to use a combination of *Chinese Gentian* and *Bupleurum* prepared in an alcoholic tincture. I reasoned that alcohol is a better carrier than water for the herbs through the liver because the liver detoxifies water-insoluble toxins for which alcohol is a better solvent. Within a few months of using this mixture in conjunction with daily morning exercise and diet control, I experienced significant improvement as judged by reduction in menstrual pain from endometriosis, arthritic pain, stiffness and improved quality of sleep. This improvement was gradual but steady.

I then came across information on apple juice fasting and olive oil/lemon juice liver and gallbladder cleansing. I decided to give it a try. The result was dramatic. After just the first cleanse, my pains, allergies and arthritis all disappeared. Apparently, malic acid in apple juice is excellent in dissolving the stagnant bile accumulated in the liver. I was really amazed by the amount of stagnant bile driven out by the apple juice. Details of the apple juice fasting and olive oil/lemon juice cleansing procedures are given in gallbladder flushing.

After my experience, a friend of mine who had gallstones for years decided to try this liver and gallbladder cleansing procedure. She did not get any result the first time. There was one difference between her procedure and mine. She did not use the Chinese Gentian and Bupleurum tincture before the cleansing, like I did. I reasoned she probably had a congested liver (many people with gallstones are likely to have congested livers) which made it difficult for the apple juice to penetrate. She took my advice and used the Chinese Gentian and Bupleurum tincture for about one month before her second cleansing. This time it was successful.

I have subsequently prepared the Chinese Gentian and Bupleurum tincture in commercial form (called "Chinese Bitters"). For certain conditions such as gallstone problems or absence of gallbladder (removal by surgery), it is best used in conjunction with another herbal tincture called *Coptis* which stimulates bile flow.

Restoring my liver health

Nutritional deficiency is a common problem for individuals with liver disorders. Most nutrients pass through the body without being assimilated if the liver is weak. I was taking many vitamins, minerals, and herbal supplements for years without any effect. My improvement came only after my liver was cleansed and strengthened. It was after my experience that I realized that supplements taken by individuals with weak livers may end up as waste products for the body to dispose because the supplements cannot be digested or assimilated.

As described above, I restored my liver to health in less than a year by cleansing it with Chinese Bitters, by liver and gallbladder flush and by eliminating all liver and kidney weakening foods such as white flour, white sugar, caffeine, chocolate, deep fried foods, all citrus fruits, tomato, banana, cold drinks and foods which chill the liver and kidneys. I took supplements or foods rich in Vitamin B's, C and minerals to nourish my organs and used the various Chinese herbs to increase "Chi" (energy flow) in the liver. I also perform daily morning exercises which involve stretching and deep breathing, based on an exercise regimen widely practiced in Taiwan called Y-Dan (a simple and easy to learn alternative to Tai Chi with only 19 movements). A video that provides clear, easy-to-follow instructions on Y-Dan is available for order.

Exercise stimulates blood circulation. When blood circulates better, all organs function better. Stretching and deep breathing kind of exercises early in the morning provide the most benefit for anyone with sluggish liver. According to Chinese medicine, the liver works hard to filter our blood between 1 to 3 am during our sleep. A fair amount of blood may be still retained in the liver when we wake up in the morning if the liver is congested. Early morning exercises help to bring the blood out of the liver into the circulating system. One of the symptoms for the excess blood retained in the liver is waking up in the morning with stiffness or numbness in the fingers or dizziness due to lack of blood circulation.

Because of my high estrogen levels, I also had to avoid foods or herbs that have estrogenic activities such as Don Quei, Licorice, Ginseng, Royal Jelly, fennel, anise, flaxseed oil, clover, red clover, evening primrose oil, etc. I avoided taking all pharmaceutical drugs because most of them are weakening or damaging to the liver or kidneys.

Stress congests the liver and constricts the blood vessels. It causes poor blood flow and the whole body becomes sluggish. Furthermore, it is believed in Chinese medicine that anger (especially suppressed anger) injures the liver, grief injures the lungs, fear or fright injures the kidneys and worry injures the spleen. As mentioned earlier, all these organs support each other and work together. Disharmonies in one of these organs tend to produce an imbalance in the corresponding emotions and vice versa.

According to Chinese medicine, cold and raw vegetables such as salads tend to weaken the spleen unless the individuals who consume them are robust and strong ("Yang" type person). This could be the reason why many vegetarians look pale because of their weak spleen although Vitamin B12 deficiency may also be responsible. Also, most vegetarians eat a lot of salad, even though cooked vegetables are better to eat. One of the common signs of weak spleen is dry lips or frequent thirst. Chronic diarrhea or loose bowel may be another sign of weak spleen. Since the spleen is an important organ for red cell production, weak spleen is a common cause of anemia, especially in cases that do not respond to iron supplements.

I suffered from heart palpitations since my early teenage years. I fainted for the first time in my life in school at the age of eleven. It was due to a hereditary weak heart according to the doctor who saw me. He warned me that I might faint easily throughout my life. He was right in that prediction until the health of my liver was restored in 1989. I never fainted again and my heart palpitations disappeared.

When my liver became healthier my vision also improved and is actually better than it was in 1989 when I was still suffering from liver congestion. I had never used eyeglasses at any time during my life and I still don't need them. The Chinese have a saying: "The liver opens into the eyes. When the liver is harmonized, the eyes can distinguish the five colors". Clean and nutrient-rich blood from a healthy, efficient liver can flow easily and nourish the eye tissues better. Stimulation of blood flow to the eyes by massaging also helps. I massage the pressure points for blood circulation to the eyes twice daily, morning and night when I lie flat in bed. In this position blood does not have to flow against gravity.

References:

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2. Gallstone symptoms, gallstone treatment, kidney stone symptoms and removal

Gallstones and kidney stones often occur together. When either kind of stone exists, the liver, kidneys and the whole system cannot work efficiently. Because the kidneys and gallbladder are very close to each other, the stagnation of one organ often causes the other organ to become sluggish too. Gallstones and kidney stones usually occur together because both stones are very often the result of stagnation. In order to reduce the chance of having stone accumulation and stagnation again, it is better to cleanse both kidney stones and gallstones.

Gallstone and kidney stone formation

Gallstones may be caused by chemical disturbance, faulty diet, liver sluggishness or toxicity, gallbladder stagnation or bile stasis which is often the result of sluggish liver. "Absorption of fluid by the gallbladder occurs to a much greater extent than normal when there is stasis of bile in the biliary system. Gallbladder bile becomes very concentrated as a result, and cholesterol crystallizes out of solution, the crystals so formed gradually growing into large gallstones" [Selkurt, E.E. (editor), *Physiology*, 2nd edition, Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1966]. When the kidneys are sluggish, they do not empty during urination. As a result, the stagnant urine may become too concentrated and eventually calcium salts crystallize out. Estrogen replacement therapy and birth control pills are common contributing factors to these problems because they weaken the liver and gallbladder.

Gallstone symptoms and gallstone removal

Based on the Chinese gallbladder "meridians" (see Figure at right), gallstones may be associated with headaches, shoulder and neck pain. According to Chinese medicine, when gallstones are present, the weak gallbladder makes energy flow along the meridians sluggish and result in tense and tight feeling. If blood circulation becomes so poor that the blood flow becomes stagnant, pain is the result. The presence of gallstones is often a contributing factor to weak spleen because the nerves on the spleen and gallbladder are connected to each other. Weak spleen may lead to hypoglycemia.

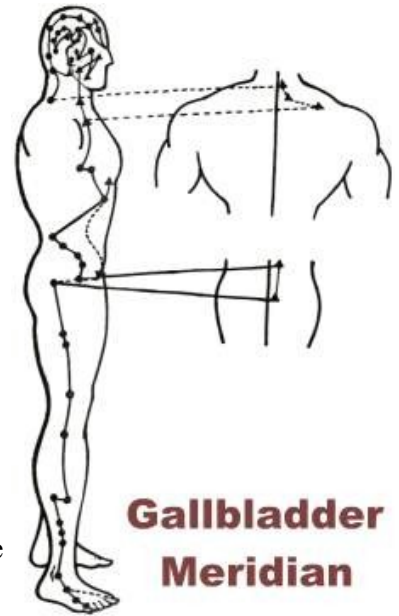
Sleep problem is another common symptom with gallstones. In more severe cases, the gallstones may cause dizziness, bad taste in the mouth, vomiting of the bile, painful flanks, aggravation, anger and depression, insomnia and nightmares or hot and cold flushes [*A Barefoot Doctor's Manual*, the American translation of the official Chinese Paramedical Manual, Running Press, Philadelphia, 1990]. These symptoms are often reduced significantly after the gallstones are removed. Gallstones may take up to 25 years to show symptoms.

Women are four times more likely to have gallstones than men. I suspect that pregnancy and childbirth may make the abdominal area more stagnant and become susceptible to gallstone formation. I used to think that gallstones only develop in people who are obese or have a high fat diet. I now believe bile stasis or gallbladder stagnation is a major cause of gallstone formation. I have never been on a high fat diet and have always been under-weight. I was never on birth control pills. When I tried my first gallbladder flush, more than 50 gallstones were released.

I had severe congested liver which caused sleep disorders including difficulty in falling asleep and waking up several times through the night. It was not unusual for me to sleep only 3 to 4 hours or less at night. After my liver became healthier (see liver cleanse), I slept much better but I still had to get up at least once every night. I thought that I had no choice but to live with it. Surprisingly, after my gallstones were flushed out, I started sleeping right through most nights without waking up at all. A friend of mine had headaches for more than 30 years. They also disappeared after her gallstones were flushed out.

Details of the procedure I used to flush out gallstones is described in Gallbladder flush and gallstone treatment - alternatives to gallbladder surgery. An important difference between my procedure and that of many other flush procedures is that I use the Chinese herbal tincture Gold Coin Grass (GCG) to soften and crush the gallstones before flushing. This makes the flushing easier, more efficient and complete, especially for larger stones. Many people actually experience pain relief already from using Gold Coin Grass (GCG) (botanical name: *Herba Lysimachiae*, Chinese sound translation: *Chin-chien Tsao*).

Neck and shoulder pain, a common complaint, is usually attributed to prolonged hours in front of a computer screen, poor posture, injury or car accident. A 55-year old man came to me a few years ago complaining about pain in his gallbladder area when he ate. I asked him if he also had pain on his neck and shoulder area. He said yes but that it was from a car accident 6 years earlier. When he started taking *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)* in the morning and *Curcuma* at night, his shoulder and neck pain started to subside. After his first liver and gallbladder flush, the pain was 90% gone. He was very surprised to find that his neck and shoulder pain was associated with his gallstones even though his pain started only after his car accident. According to Chinese medicine, "blood stasis" is the basic cause of pain. It is likely that this man already had gallstone when his car accident occurred. His gallstones led to poor blood circulation in his neck and shoulder area which is part of the gallbladder meridian. Poor blood circulation may already have caused tightness and tension that he had not noticed. His car accident probably triggered blood stasis leading to pain. When his gallbladder became healthy again, blood circulation was better and there was no more blood stasis.



Kidney stone symptoms and treatment

According to Chinese medicine, the kidneys support the bones. Healthy kidneys are essential for strong bones. Other than pain in the kidney area, kidney stones may be associated with lower back and knee pain and may even cause hematuria (blood in urine), painful or difficult urination or cold sweat [*A Barefoot Doctor's Manual*, the American translation of the official Chinese Paramedical Manual, Running Press, Philadelphia, 1990]. Weak kidneys may also lead to poor head hair and disorders in the ears. Osteoporosis is a major health concern with many older people. One of the solutions to the problem may be maintaining healthy kidneys. Weak kidneys may cause increased urinary losses of calcium and phosphates due to the kidneys' inability to form an acid urine (Harper, H.A., *Review of Physiological Chemistry*, 14th edition, Lange Medical Publications, 1973).

The Chinese herb *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)* has been commonly used in Chinese medicine for centuries for gallstone removal and kidney stone removal. For kidney stone treatment, it is taken in the form of tea because kidney detoxifies water soluble toxins. However, the tincture form with low level of alcohol seems to be more effective for gallstones because alcohol is a better solvent and carrier than water for the liver. Since the liver detoxifies non-water soluble toxins, water is a poor carrier. *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)* is capable of softening and crushing the gallstones. This has been my own experience as well as that of many other people who used the herb. The crushed and softened stones are flushed through much more readily.

The following kidney stone removal procedure has been used by many people with good results (disappearance of pain in a few days). It involves drinking a tea made from 3 different herbs: *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)*, *corn silk* and *Eucommia*. These herbs are mixed together and boiled in water for about 20 minutes. About 4-5 cups are needed daily, taken before meals or bedtime on empty stomach. Both *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)* and *corn silk* are kidney cleansers and diuretics which may deplete the body of potassium. Therefore it is recommended that potassium supplement be taken to replenish the loss. The Chinese herb *Eucommia* increases energy flow in the kidneys and is complementary to *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)* and *corn silk* because anyone with kidney stones or sludges has sluggish kidneys.

An important note to anyone with kidney stones is to avoid cold foods or drinks. Cold drinks chill your internal organs and weaken them, especially the kidneys and spleen. Many of my clients told me that they can feel the chilling effect from cold drinks after several months of not having them. Foods that weaken the kidneys should also be avoided. They include all citrus fruits, tomato and banana.

As a side note, we were pleasantly surprised to find that the kidney tea described above (made from 3 different herbs: *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)*, *corn silk* and *Eucommia*) also helped dogs with urinary difficulties or prostate problems.

3. Gallbladder flush and gallstone treatment - alternatives to gallbladder surgery; problems with gallbladder removed

"Gallstones, a national health problem" - the American Liver Foundation

Gallbladder problems

Gallbladder operation is the most common operation in North America. Every year, more than half a million people in the United States and more than 50,000 people in Canada undergo surgery to remove their gallbladders because of gallstones. Approximately 80% of all gallstones show no symptoms and may remain "silent" for years. Once symptoms arise, they persist and increase in frequency. The most common triggers for gallbladder attacks are caffeine, chocolate, eggs, dairy products (especially ice cream) and greasy or deep fried foods. Symptoms may include right upper quadrant abdominal discomfort or sharp pain, gas or fullness after a heavy meal. The pain can also spread to the chest, shoulder, neck or back. In addition to these symptoms, stones expelled from the gallbladder during contraction may become lodged within the bile duct leading to infection of the bile duct or gallbladder.

Different approaches to gallbladder problems in conventional medicine all carry unwanted risks. The most common treatment, surgery, has as many as 10% of patients coming out of surgery with stones remaining in the bile ducts according to the U.S. National Institute of Health. Bile duct injury is another risk. According to the Society of American Gastrointestinal Endoscopic Surgeons, "complications of Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy are infrequent, but include bleeding, infection, pneumonia, blood clots, or heart problems. Unintended injury to an adjacent structure such as the common bile duct or duodenum may occur and may require another surgical procedure to repair it. Bile leakage into the abdomen from the tubular channels leading from the liver to the intestine has been described."

The other treatment in conventional medicine is gallstone dissolution by different drugs such as chenodeoxycholic acid (Chenix), ursodeoxycholic acid (Actigall), methyl tert-butyl ether (MTBE), and ethyl propionate. These drugs only work on smaller

cholesterol stones and may cause diarrhea, hepatic injury and increase in plasma cholesterol level, nausea, pain or fever [References 2 and 3 at the end of this section]. MTBE administration (intragallbladder instillation) is an invasive procedure. [see References 1,2,3 at the end of this section].

Alternative to gallbladder surgery

An alternative to surgery and gallstone removal by chemical dissolution is gallbladder flush. Traditional European folk remedy recommends the use of olive oil and lemon juice to flush the gallstones. A major concern is that if the stones are too big, they may not easily come out or may even get stuck on the way out. Traditional Chinese medicine recommends the use of "*Gold Coin Grass (GCG)*" (botanical name: *Herba Lysimachiae*, Chinese sound translation: *Chin-chien Tsao*) to crush and soften the stones so that they will come out slowly. This tends to take a relatively long time. However, centuries of experience has shown that *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)* can be taken safely without side effects. In most cases, alleviation of gallbladder pain is experienced within a few days of using *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)* in tincture form. This is a significant benefit. I have found from my own experience and that of many of my clients that a combination of the following steps to be the most effective and efficient.

Gallbladder cleansing and flushing procedures

Step 1: Use "*Gold Coin Grass (GCG)*" to crush and soften the gallstones.

"*Gold Coin Grass (GCG)*" in tincture form, using alcohol as a carrier, has been found to be more effective than tablet or tea form, presumably because alcohol as a solvent facilitates the assimilation of the herbs. It is recommended that one to two 250 ml bottles of *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)* tincture be used before attempting gallbladder flushing described below. One tablespoonful is taken every day; therefore each bottle should take 2 to 3 weeks to finish. Two bottles of *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)* may be necessary for individuals over the age of 50 or who have gallbladder problems for many years. For some people who are ex-heavy drinkers, a burning sensation may sometimes be experienced when using *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)* tincture but this does not seem to affect the efficacy of the herb. Because the amount of alcohol contained in a tablespoonful is very small, this should not present a problem even for ex-drinkers. Having problems sleeping or constipation is usually a sign of liver congestion. *Coptis* which stimulates bile flow and *Curcuma* which increases energy flow in the liver and gallbladder are recommended to be taken in conjunction with *GCG* to increase the efficiency of flushing. Alternatively, if gallbladder-related pain is not a concern, *Chinese Bitters* may be taken prior to *GCG* in order to decongest the liver.

Step 2: Intestinal Cleansing

1. Soak 1 teaspoon to 1 tablespoon of Bentonite clay in 1 cup of filtered water for 12 hours. Start soaking in the morning.
2. Then add ½ to 1 tablespoon of psyllium husks or plantago seeds to the clay mixture and mix well.
3. Drink and eat the whole cup of mixture *immediately* and then followed by 1 cup of warm water before bedtime.
4. Drink at least 8 cups of warm water a day including 2 cups first thing in the morning.
5. Repeat the procedure until the stool becomes normal (usually 1 to 2 weeks), when no more intestinal cloggings are coming out.

Please note that intestinal cleansing is not necessary if you have never had constipation problems.

Step 3: Gallbladder Flush

The following procedure is based on: "Natural Liver Therapy" by Christopher Hobbs, L. Ac., Botanica Press, Capitola, CA (1993).

1. Eat only whole foods (un-refined foods) without fat for a whole day.
2. About an hour before bedtime (on an empty stomach), drink ¼-cup of extra virgin cold pressed olive oil mixed with ¼-cup of freshly squeezed lemon juice. Repeat this process every 15 minutes until a total of 1 cup each of olive oil and lemon juice is finished. An alternative to this procedure is to replace lemon juice with freshly-squeezed grapefruit juice. ½ cup of grapefruit juice can be used each time. A total of 1½ to 2

- cups of grapefruit juice is required. It works well and tastes better than lemon juice.
3. Go to bed immediately and lie on your right side.
 4. The next morning take 1 litre (approximately 4 cups) of warm distilled or filtered water containing two level teaspoons of un-iodized sea salt. Alternatively the addition of juice from half a lemon may be used in place of the sea salt.
 5. Eat only softly cooked vegetables and broth the second day. The gallstones should come out some time during the second day.

The stones that come out are usually dark green or black in colour. They may also be brown, off-white, green or, rarely, red in colour. Stones crushed by *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)* may come out in any shape including flat pieces or sand.

Step 3a: Liver Cleanse and Gallbladder Flush (Alternative Procedure)

An alternative procedure to Step 3 above combines gallbladder flush with liver flush. It uses apple juice fasting, as described below (based on "*Herbally Yours*", by Penny C. Royal, *Sound Nutrition, Utah, 1982*). I would like to caution that people with cancer, candida yeast infection, diabetes, hypoglycemia or stomach ulcer should not use this apple juice fasting procedure because of the high sugar content in the apple juice.

Day 1:

Take 2 cups of 8 oz organic apple juice or apple cider every 2 hours from 8 am to 8 pm. Altogether 14 cups will have been taken during this period. Do not take any other food or drinks except plain water.

Please note that the apple juice should not be taken cold from the refrigerator. It should be kept at room temperature or mixed with about 10% hot water before use because cold drinks chill the liver. For people with lots of stagnant bile, the collapsed stagnant bile may rush out after drinking apple juice. It may feel like having diarrhea but is actually stagnant bile (brownish yellow colour).

Day 2:

1. Repeat Day 1
2. At 8:30 pm, take ½-cup (4 oz) of olive oil (extra virgin cold pressed) mixed with ½-cup of lemon juice (squeezed from 3 lemons) or with ¾-cup of freshly-squeezed grapefruit juice.
3. Go immediately to bed and sleep on your right side. If there is a large amount of stones, nausea may be felt after drinking olive oil but this feeling will largely disappear on the third day after taking some food.

Day 3:

1. Upon rising in the morning, take 1 litre (approximately 4 cups) of warm distilled or filtered water containing two level teaspoons of un-iodized sea salt. Alternatively the addition of juice from half a lemon may be used in place of the sea salt. Wait for at least half an hour before eating.
2. Take vegetable broth and softly cooked vegetables only. The stones should be passed in the stool any time between midnight of Day 2 and morning of Day 4.

Note: The purpose of drinking apple juice is mainly for the malic acid in apple juice. Malic acid is a good solvent for stagnant bile in the liver. Apple juice taken during fasting would dissolve and push out stagnant bile in the liver. For someone with yeast infection, apple juice can be replaced by malic acid in capsule or powder form. The fasting procedure is the same except that apple juice is replaced by 1000 - 2000 mg of malic acid taken with 2 cups of warm water.

Optional Extra Step

The following additional step is optional, and can be used with Step 3 or Step 3a. You may want to try it yourself and see if it changes your results.

Some time ago, I was contacted by a customer who informed me that he had done 2 previous gallbladder flushes without success. He decided to try something new for his third flush attempt, so he used the liver/gallbladder flush 4-pack of Chinese Bitters, GCG, Curcuma, and Coptis according to instructions. Roughly one hour before taking his olive oil and lemon juice, he noticed that he had some left in each bottle, so he took a dose of all of them together on an empty stomach. In his words, the results were "fantastic".

This experience has since helped many others achieve a more efficient flush, including myself. My understanding is that the combination of Chinese Bitters, GCG, Coptis, and Curcuma all taken shortly before the olive oil and lemon juice helps the gallbladder contract more efficiently, which helps push out old stones in the back of the gallbladder.

I did my first 4 flushes (roughly 1 to 1½ months apart) in 1990. In my fourth flush, almost no more stones came out and I felt great, so I assumed that I had cleansed all of the stones from my gallbladder. Since then, I have been doing maintenance flushes once or twice a year, and in each flush, I usually release roughly 10 small stones. I had always assumed that these were newly formed stones, but in my last flush, I tried this additional step and took ½ tablespoon each of GCG and Curcuma, and 1 teaspoon each of Chinese Bitters and Coptis. I was surprised to pass two of the largest stones that I have ever seen, along with some small stones.

I believe that the large stones were very old stones in the very back of my gallbladder, and had been there all these years when I thought there were no large stones left. All of my previous flushes had failed to push them out, but this time, taking this simple extra step, I was able to move them out.

Guide to using flushing procedures

When gallstones exist, the gallbladder cannot contract efficiently. Therefore only stones in the front area of the gallbladder can be pushed out in the first flush. Then stones from the back area would slowly move forward and may cause problems again. The whole process should be repeated, including the use of GCG prior to the flush. It usually takes at least 3-4 flushes to clean out all the stones. Basically the flush should be repeated until hardly any stone comes out even though you have a good flush. The weaker your gallbladder is in contraction, the more flushes you will need in order to push out all of your stones.

A good flush means that all the loose stones are out. You feel good for at least a few days. The remaining stones are packed ones. They should be allowed some time to loosen up and get ready to come out. The interval between good flushes should be 1-2 months. Repeating the flush too soon after a good flush may waste your effort because the packed stones are not ready to come out yet. However, you can repeat the flush any time if you have an incomplete flush which means that loose stones are still somewhere and you never felt comfortable after the flush.

Once stones have been formed, the gallbladder tends to be sluggish. New stones may be formed again. Therefore 1 to 2 flushes a year is recommended for maintenance. *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)* may not be needed any more because new stones should be small and pass easily. I have been doing maintenance for years; usually around 10 to 15 small stones come out each time I do it. Chinese Bitters is the only product that I take now for maintenance, in addition to 1-2 flushes a year. I take these preventive measures because I am naturally prone to liver congestion.

There may be a need to De-congest the Liver

If the gallbladder is loaded with stones, there is very limited space in the gallbladder to store the bile. The bile, which is produced in the liver, stays in the liver and leads to liver congestion. When the liver is very congested, nutrients or herbs, which have to go through the liver first, may not reach the gallbladder. This explains why some people with very congested liver cannot flush out their stones unless they decongest their liver first. Another problem is that bile produced in the liver, through olive oil stimulation, has to flow down to the gallbladder in order to push out stones with the help of gallbladder contraction by lemon or grapefruit juice. If the liver is congested, bile flow is restricted. As a result, there is insufficient bile in the gallbladder to push the stones out.

One of our products, *Chinese Bitters*, has been found to be very effective in decongesting the liver. It is possible to take *Chinese Bitters* in conjunction with *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)* and some people do this in order to more quickly prepare for a liver/gallbladder flush. However, the added load of taking both tinctures at once may be too much strain for the liver and gallbladder in some people, particularly those who suffer from weak livers or gallbladders. If this is the case for you, then you should start with *Chinese Bitters* first. After a few weeks of liver decongestion, you can switch from *Chinese Bitters* in the morning to *Gold Coin Grass*.

When the *Gold Coin Grass* is finished, *Chinese Bitters* may be taken again for a few days before the flush. During the flush, *Chinese Bitters* can still be taken to ensure that the liver is not congested.

The use of Epsom Salt

If the gallstones are so packed that they have difficulty moving, epsom salt, which dilates the bile duct, may be helpful. This usually happens to someone who is doing the first flush. Nothing may come out at all. In this situation, you may have to repeat the olive oil/lemon juice procedure and eat one more day of vegetables. However, epsom salt solution, prepared by dissolving 3

teaspoons of epsom salt (magnesium sulfate) in 1 cup of warm water, should be taken about one-and-a-half to two hours before repeating the olive oil and lemon juice procedure.

If a stone gets stuck on its way out

It does happen, although very rarely, that a stone may get stuck on its way out. In this situation, the olive oil/lemon juice flush may be repeated. Three teaspoonfuls of epsom salt in a cup of warm water should be taken 2 hours before the olive oil/lemon juice to dilate the duct. An alternative is 1 tablespoonful each of *Coptis* and *Curcuma* taken together. This combination helps to move the stone by stimulating bile flow (*Coptis*) and increasing energy flow (*Curcuma*). It also helps to relieve pain from gallbladder attack in most cases. Furthermore, if no stone comes out during the flush the day after taking olive oil/lemon juice and you feel uncomfortable, one tablespoon each of *Coptis* and *Curcuma* can usually help to push out the stones or other blockages.

If one tablespoon each of *Coptis* and *Curcuma* fail to push out the lodged stone and relieve pain, it is usually due to stone too big to be pushed out. In this situation, some people have found the following procedure to be helpful: take 2 tablespoons of GCG to crush the stone and wait for 1½ to 2 hours before taking 1 tablespoon each of *Coptis* and *Curcuma* again. The crushed stones appear to move easier and the pain is relieved.

A stuck stone during the flush is different from a regular gallbladder attack. During the flush, a lot of bile is produced which serves as an excellent lubricant. The pain produced is relatively dull and mild in comparison with the very sharp pain experienced in a regular gallbladder attack.

User Experience

I never thought I had gallstones before I did my first liver and gallbladder flush. Other than constipation and watery stools in the past, I had no pain or any other symptoms. In my first flush, some of the stones that came out were about the size of a peanut. I took *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)* before my second flush a few months later. The stones all came out in pieces and were soft.

A 53-year old woman used a patented Chinese medicine in tablet form called "Lidan" (also contains *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)* as the main ingredient) for 3 years. It did relieve her shoulder pain and reduce her gallbladder pain from constant pain to a few attacks a day. When she started using *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)* in tincture form, her pain was reduced to only one attack every few days within two weeks of using the *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)* tincture. After finishing one 250 ml bottle of the tincture, she did liver and gallbladder flushing (described above), her pain disappeared completely.

A 68-year old man had shoulder pain and was treated as arthritis with anti-inflammatory drugs for 6 years. He had a severe gallbladder attack one day. Ultrasound showed that he had 3 gallstones. He decided to do gallbladder flush instead of surgery. About 20 stones were released the first time he did the gallbladder flush program which required epsom salt. After the flush, ultrasound showed that he still had 2 stones. Obviously the other 19 stones that came out were missed in the first ultrasound (small stones are missed easily in ultrasound) and the 2 stones that remained were too big to come out. He had another minor gallbladder attack after the first flush. In his second attempt, he took *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)* to crush his stones and *Curcuma* for increasing energy flow in the liver before flushing using the apple juice program (see Step 3a above). Close to a hundred stones came out. He repeated the *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)* and apple juice program 3 months later. It was after the third flush that all his symptoms including shoulder and neck pain disappeared completely.

A lady in her late 60's had gallbladder problem since her 20's. Early in 1998 she had a severe gallbladder attack. She refused gallbladder operation and tried two bottles of *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)* before her first liver and gallbladder flush (using Step 3a above). For unknown reasons nothing came out. Being determined to flush out her stones naturally, she tried again two weeks later to flush without taking any more *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)*. Large amounts of stones came out this time. Altogether she flushed 4 times within a half year period and she said she had never felt so energetic before. This experience shows that in some cases where the stones are tightly packed it may take more than one flushing to start getting them out.

A 55-year old man had shoulder pain for 6 years because of a car accident. He had pain in his gallbladder area after each meal. I told him that he had gallstones and his shoulder pain was probably related to gallstones because the shoulder and neck are all part of the gallbladder meridian. His shoulder and neck pain was reduced about 30% just by taking *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)* and *Curcuma*. After his first liver and gallbladder flush, his pain was 90% gone. What really happened was that he already had gallstones which caused poor blood circulation in his shoulder and neck area when he had the accident. When blood circulation is sluggish, it tends to become stagnant and leads to pain. The car accident just triggered the blood stagnation. When his gallbladder was healthier, the blood circulation in his neck and shoulder improved and his pain was reduced.

For some individuals who cannot take olive oil or lemon juice, taking *Gold Coin Grass (GCG)* tincture for up to one year may be the slow but safe way of gallstone removal.

Control of Diet

The gallbladder is connected to the spleen by nerves and is also closely connected to the liver. Anyone with gallbladder problems or with gallbladder removed should avoid or minimize foods that weaken the liver or spleen such as white flour, white sugar, caffeine, chocolate and deep fried foods. According to Chinese medicine, cold foods, cold drinks, citrus fruits (unless you also eat the outer skin, which is not advised unless the fruit was organically grown because pesticides often sink into the outer skin), tomato, banana and even salad should also be avoided or minimized because they weaken the spleen and kidneys.

If you already had gallbladder surgery

The gallbladder stores, concentrates and secretes bile which is produced in the liver. The bile is necessary in the intestine for the digestion and absorption of fat. It is also important for lubricating the intestinal wall. Once the gallbladder is removed, the bile lost its storage space and tends to accumulate in the liver. The result is reduced bile flow because the liver does not contract to squirt the bile into the intestine like the gallbladder does. The reduced bile flow usually causes indigestion, constipation or diarrhea. When the accumulated bile becomes congested in the liver, it weakens the liver functions and may even lead to depression. According to Chinese medicine, depression is a sign of blocked liver energy. The combined effects of liver congestion and intestinal sluggishness may also cause sleep disorder, insomnia, or bad breath. Furthermore, the reduced bile flow could weaken the spleen and pancreas so much that diabetes may result. The spleen is connected to the gallbladder by nerves. When the gallbladder is removed, the spleen is out of balance and becomes weakened. According to Chinese medicine, the spleen provides energy to the heart. A weak spleen therefore results in a weak heart. Indeed, the statistics do show that heart attacks are more common among people without gallbladders.

Auto-immune diseases and allergies may also be the result of gallbladder removal because they are often caused by weak liver and spleen. Other health problems that may be experienced after gallbladder removal include itchy skin, arthritis or anemia. Allergy and arthritis are associated with weak liver and spleen. Itchy skin is usually caused by weak spleen if rashes (inflammation) are involved. If there are no rashes, it may be caused by bilirubin (one of the major components in bile) crystalizing under the skin. When excessive bilirubin is in the blood due to excessive bile carried to blood circulation from the liver, bilirubin may crystalize because it has low solubility in blood. Excessive bile in blood is usually the result of stagnant bile flow caused by liver congestion or some kind of blockage.

Our red cells live about 100-120 days. The worn out cells are destroyed by the spleen or liver. When the spleen and liver are healthy, the broken down products would be recycled to produce new red cells. Weak liver and weak spleen that have poor capability of recycling these broken down products may lead to anemia.

When the liver is badly congested with stagnant bile which quite often happens to people with their gallbladder removed, the only relief is to stimulate their bile flow. From our experience working with many people who had gallbladder surgery, a combination of taking *Chinese Bitters* in the morning (to cleanse the liver) and *Coptis* at night (to stimulate bile flow) will help to relieve symptoms related to gallbladder removal, such as sleep problems and difficulty with bowel movement.

A helpful regimen in the morning is to start with 2 cups of warm water, then do your exercises. You can take Chinese Bitters $\frac{3}{4}$ -1 hour later when the water has emptied out of the stomach. Another $\frac{1}{2}$ -hour later, you can have your breakfast. The warm water helps to "activate" the intestines and kidneys.

It is not uncommon for people who have their gallbladder removed to have gallstones in their liver. When the bile that is produced in the liver cannot be stored in the gallbladder anymore, it tends to get congested and become stagnant in the liver. When the bile is stagnant in the liver for too long, it becomes too concentrated; then cholesterol and bile pigments may crystalize to form stones in the liver similar to what happens in the gallbladder.

A 68-year old man had his gallbladder removed about one year before he came to see me. I recommended that he should flush his liver by the following procedure. First he should take our *Chinese Bitters* in the morning and *Coptis* at night. When these are finished, he should follow up by taking GCG in the morning and *Curcuma* at night. When he did his first liver flush (Step 3a above) after he finished the GCG and *Curcuma*, he was surprised to find that he flushed out more than a hundred small stones. He told me that he felt at least 10 years younger.

Summary

Gallstones are a national health issue which cannot be solved by simply removing peoples' gallbladders the moment they develop problems. However, the Chinese herb known as Gold Coin Grass can help alleviate these problems, and liver and gallbladder flushing can be used to clean out stones and restore your liver and gallbladder health.

The 4 herbal tinctures used to prepare for a liver/gallbladder flush are Chinese Bitters, GCG, Coptis, and Curcuma. For people who still sleep well and have normal, regular bowel movements (not loose or hard), Coptis and Curcuma are not necessary for preparation, but can still be useful if problems arise during the flush (such as a stone which gets stuck in the ducts on the way out or more rarely, a gallbladder attack).

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4. Estrogen dominance, womens' problems, amenorrhea, and menopause

Excessive estrogens and stagnation of blood circulation are the major cause of most women's problems including breast, uterine and ovarian cancers. According to Dr. John R. Lee in his book "What Your Doctor May Not Tell You About Menopause: the Breakthrough Book on Natural Progesterone" (Warner Books, 1996), estrogen dominance is the cause of most women's chronic health problems. We are living in a polluted world where estrogens are present in almost every type of food that we eat. Since the liver is the organ that removes estrogens, a weak liver that fails to remove estrogens efficiently may lead to their accumulation (for liver cleansing and strengthening, see liver cleanse). When excessive estrogens become trapped in the uterus, ovary, or breast due to stagnation, they overstimulate cell division and lead to abnormal growth such as fibroids, cysts or cancer in these organs. Estrogens may also be accumulated in the brain or liver because they both have estrogen receptors.

PMS

A common woman's problem, PMS, is usually caused by high estrogen to progesterone ratio; the estrogen level may not be high in absolute value but is high relative to progesterone. The common symptoms of PMS such as mood swings, depression and bloating are all signs of estrogen dominance. Evening Primrose oil, which contains estrogenic activity, is a popular supplement for PMS sufferers. It offers quick relief for PMS symptoms but long term use may aggravate the problems. Most people don't realize this. A PMS sufferer who had been taking evening primrose oil for 4 years came to see me. Her thighs were swollen with water retention due to excessive estrogens. After I told her to stop taking evening primrose oil, her swollen thighs became normal in about a month's time.

The herb Vitex stimulates progesterone production in the body and therefore helps to balance the hormones. Experience from many of my clients has shown that taking the herbal tinctures *Fem-Mate* (contains Vitex) and *Chinese Bitters* is beneficial to PMS sufferers.

Amenorrhea - Absence or Abnormal Stoppage of Menstruation

Amenorrhea may be associated with congenital abnormalities, pituitary insufficiency, metabolic diseases (thyroid dysfunction, diabetes, adrenal hyperplasia), undernourishment, anemia, wasting diseases, severe infections or hormone abnormalities - the most common cause in our modern way of living.

"The administration of large amounts of estrogen prevents menstruation for a long period of time" (see Reference 2 at the end of this Section, page 764).

Other than estrogens in meat and dairy products, pesticide sprays (environmental estrogens) on fruits and vegetables also mimic estrogens in our bodies when ingested. As a result, hormonal abnormalities has become a major issue for amenorrhea nowadays. A weak liver that fails to eliminate all these ingested estrogens is often responsible for hormonal abnormalities.

One of our products, "*Chinese Bitters*", has been used successfully to induce menstruation by cleansing the liver and eliminating estrogens more efficiently. A woman in Hawaii had no period for 18 months. She had her period in 15 days after she started using "*Chinese Bitters*". Another young woman in Ontario, Canada had no period for 3 years. She used "*Chinese Bitters*" for more than a month without success. However, when she used "*Coptis*" (another of our products) in conjunction with "*Chinese Bitters*", her period started in 5 days. The liver eliminates estrogens through bile and urine. Being an effective bile flow stimulator, *Coptis* helps the liver to eliminate estrogen more efficiently by carrying more estrogens out of the body through bile.

Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS)

I was never diagnosed with PCOS, but I would not be surprised if I did have it. PCOS is another woman's problem caused by high levels of estrogens in the body. Medical treatment usually uses Clomiphene (an anti-estrogen drug) which treats the symptoms, not the problems. Possible side effects include hot flashes, nausea, headache, breast tenderness and sometimes blurred vision.

PCOS is a leading cause of female infertility due to excessive estrogens (for details please read Section 6 of this webpage). Excessive estrogens are often the result of the liver's failure to eliminate them efficiently. The commonly associated problems (heart disease and diabetes) are also indications of weak liver. Our *Chinese Bitters*, *Coptis* and Taheebo in addition to daily morning exercise have proven to be very beneficial. The regimen is the same as that for endometriosis and infertility. They are all caused by high estrogen levels.

Woman's weight problems

Estrogens and the liver have important roles in weight problem or obesity which is common among women with PCOS or other woman's problems. Metabolism is mostly carried out in the liver. Sluggish metabolism due to sluggish liver and too much estrogens are contributing factors to weight gain. When the liver fails to eliminate estrogens efficiently, the excessive estrogens stimulate fat cell production, usually around the lower abdominal area and upper thigh where estrogens are more concentrated. Estrogens also bind to sodium which retains water and leads to weight gain.

Many women were pleasantly surprised to find their weight reduced unexpectedly by taking *Chinese Bitters*, *Coptis* and doing daily morning exercise. Daily morning exercise helps to activate the liver. When the liver becomes more efficient and bile flows better following use of *Chinese Bitters* and *Coptis*, weight problem is usually helped significantly. By stimulating bile flow, *Coptis* helps the liver to eliminate estrogens more efficiently because the liver depends on bile flow to carry estrogens out.

Diet is important too. Foods that weaken the liver and kidneys as mentioned in Section 3 of this webpage should be avoided.

Estrogens, blood stagnation and woman's problems

There is an interesting observation mentioned in the book "*Estrogens in the Environment*" [see Reference 1 at the end of this section]: "Chinese boat women who nurse their offsprings from only one breast have a four-fold higher incidence of cancer in the non-suckled breast". This is an indication that stagnation has an important role in tumor or cancer growth.

Looking back, my liver problems started in my teenage years because of my very stressful childhood. I tired easily and I had a poor complexion and juvenile arthritis. I had however no uterine fibroids, ovarian cysts or endometriosis. I was very active and had absolutely no excess fat in my abdominal area; the estrogens were not trapped even though their levels might have been high. My uterine fibroids, ovarian cysts and endometriosis started only after I accumulated a thick layer of fat in my abdominal area from pregnancy and inactivity in my 30's.

The controversy about plant estrogens or phytoestrogens

There seems to be a common misconception in the natural health community that women with high estrogen levels should take phytoestrogen (plant estrogen) because phytoestrogens are "protective estrogens" which reduce estrogenic activity. It is believed that phytoestrogens compete with endogenous estrogens for estrogen receptors. When the estrogen receptors are occupied by phytoestrogens, cell divisions are reduced because phytoestrogens are "weak estrogens". This theory made sense to me until my own experience showed otherwise. With my endometriosis, my pain level was a measurement for my condition. When I tried Don Quei, Licorice, Ginseng and Royal Jelly, I did feel better initially for a few weeks because they helped my blood circulation. As I continued to take these remedies, my pain would come back with a vengeance, more severe than before. I realized that weak estrogens could add up significantly if given enough time. I believe that many women are misled by initial feelings of wellness without realizing that longer periods of usage actually makes the problem worse. Many other endometriosis sufferers that I know also have had similar experiences with phytoestrogen. After my personal experience, my belief is that weak plant estrogens may replace our own more potent estrogens for receptor sites, but our own estrogens still have to go somewhere if the liver is incapable of eliminating them.

In *Townsend Letters for Doctors and Patients* (January, 1997 issue), Ray Peat, a renowned biologist in the U.S., stated that "the concept of a protective estrogen is very similar to the idea of protective mutagens or protective carcinogens". He mentioned that "Alexander Lipshuts demonstrated that a continuous, weak estrogenic stimulus was immensely effective in producing first fibromas, then cancer, in one organ after another, and the effect was not limited to the reproductive system". For example, the brain and liver, which also have estrogen receptors, may grow tumours too.

Interestingly, one of the three common estrogens, *Estriol*, has similar properties. Being a less potent cell stimulant, Estriol was once classified as an estrogen antagonist. In the book *Estrogens in the Environment* [see Reference 1 at the end of this section], it was mentioned "because it failed to induce breast tumors in susceptible rodent strains and appeared to block such induction by Estradiol and Estrone, it was considered to be a safe estrogen". However, later studies showed that Estriol was safe only if it was administered as a single injection. A continuous administration of Estriol showed the same responses from that induced by Estradiol which is the most potent estrogen. Continuous administration of Estriol was also shown to induce breast tumors in rodents.

Estriol has been suggested as having a protective role in breast cancer based on the observation that oriental women who have a high [Estriol/(Estradiol + Estrone)] ratio in their blood also have a low incidence of breast cancer [see Reference 1 at the end of this section]. Soya bean (contains phytoestrogen) has also been suggested as being protective in breast cancer because Japanese women who consume much more soya bean than Western women have lower incidence of breast cancer. My observation is that in the past oriental women took much less medical drugs including painkillers compared to women in Western societies. However oriental breast cancer incidence has gone up significantly in recent years even though soya bean products are still consumed there much more than in Western societies. I believe this trend may in part be due to increased consumption of medications. The American Liver Foundation stated that the amount of medicine consumed has increased greatly with resulting dangers to the liver. The elevated estrogen level caused by a weak liver may not be detected in blood tests because blood estrogen levels do not necessarily reflect estrogen levels in tissues. Estrogen levels in the tissues cannot be measured.

Estrogens bind to sodium which retains water. That is why many women who take estrogen therapy may find significant weight gain. The fact that estrogen therapy weakens both liver and kidneys and therefore slows down the metabolism may also aggravate weight problems.

How to reduce estrogen levels and stagnation of blood circulation?

1. Perform daily physical exercise, which reduces estrogen production and stress, and also reduces stagnation. It promotes a healthy circulatory system and activates the liver. I found the Chinese exercise [Y-Dan](#), which I have been doing every morning for years, is very beneficial.
2. Learn to relax and reduce stress. Relaxation opens up blood vessels and relaxes different organs.
3. Perform cleansing and strengthening of the liver in order to eliminate estrogen more efficiently.
4. Avoid or minimize estrogen-containing foods or herbs. Foods that weaken the liver or kidneys as mentioned in Section 1 of this webpage should also be avoided.

Pesticides sprayed on fruits or vegetables are another source of estrogen (xenoestrogens). Soaking them in a water-vinegar mixture for 20 to 30 minutes followed by rinsing in clean water can remove much of the pesticides if organically-grown vegetables or fruits are unavailable.

A friend of mine loves cheese, fresh fruits and vegetables. She was still menstruating at the age of 55. I reasoned that she was taking in too much estrogen from eating cheese and pesticide-sprayed fruits and vegetables. I suggested that she stop eating cheese and soak the vegetables and fruits in a vinegar/water mixture (one part of vinegar and one part of water) to remove the pesticides because vinegar is a better solvent than water. Her period stopped the first month after she followed my suggestion.

The following are some of the herbs and foods with estrogenic activities:

HERBS	FOODS (see references at the end of this section)
Anise, hops, fennel, black cohosh, milk thistle, clover, red clover, Don Quai, licorice, ginseng, royal jelly, peony, nettle, sage, fenugreek, evening primrose oil, burdock, chamomiles, rhubarb	French bean, date palm, dates, garlic, pomegranate, apple, soyabean, chick pea, cherry, alfalfa, soya sprouts, cow pea, green beans, red beans, split peas, flaxseed, raspberry, carrot and squash (both have beta carotene)

Generally I have found that estrogen contents in foods are less than in herbs. My suggestion for women with hormone imbalance is to avoid herbs which have estrogenic activities such as Don Quai, Licorice, Ginseng, Royal Jelly, fennel, hops, anise, clover, flax seed oil and evening primrose oil even though they may make you feel better initially. Estrogen-containing foods such as alfalfa, chick pea, carrot (or beta carotene) can be taken occasionally but not on a regular basis.

Menopause and liver, kidney and bone health

Most medications are damaging to the liver and kidneys. My suggestion is to take them only if they are absolutely necessary.

Proponents of Chinese medicine believe that liver and kidney health is very important for one's well-being especially during menopause. I feel blessed that I breezed through my menopause without any symptoms because my liver became healthy and my woman's problems disappeared 5 years before my "change of life". Someone I know suffered incredibly during her menopause. When she told me that she took painkillers for 14 years for her headache, I realized that painkillers might be the culprit because they are damaging to the liver and kidneys.

According to Chinese medicine, hot flashes are the result of sluggish liver. During menopause, the liver has to go through significant adjustments due to hormonal changes. When the liver is sluggish, the "*Chi*" (energy flow) in the liver encounters too much resistance due to the adjustments and therefore produce "heat". If the liver is healthy, both the blood flow and "energy flow" are smooth and no "heat" will result. Spicy foods, especially ginger and cinnamon, are very "yang" foods. They congest the liver and produce "heat" that could aggravate hot flashes. Women who suffer from hot flashes may have to avoid these foods.

Before menopause, the estrogens and progesterones are both produced by ovaries and adrenals. During menopause, ovarian activities are greatly reduced and the adrenals become the major suppliers of these hormones. Without healthy kidneys, the adrenals, which sit directly on top of the kidneys, cannot efficiently take over the role as major producer of estrogens and progesterones. This is a basic cause of women's menopausal problems.

Weak kidneys can also contribute to osteoporosis which is a major health concern with many post-menopausal women. According to Chinese medicine, the kidneys support the bones. Healthy kidneys are essential for strong bones. Weak kidneys may cause increased urinary losses of calcium and phosphates due to the kidneys' inability to form an acid urine (Harper, H.A., Review of Physiological Chemistry, 14th edition, Lange Medical Publications, 1973).

Strong and healthy bones require good diet, exercise, healthy kidneys and digestive system. Adequate intakes of proteins, vitamins and minerals and proper absorption of these nutrients by a healthy digestive system are vital. Healthy kidneys maintain calcium and phosphate balance. Regular exercise increases the blood supply to bones and also provides mechanical stimulus to bone formation. Morning exercise is more beneficial than exercise at other times of the day. It activates the liver, stimulates blood circulation and strengthens the bones. I have been doing daily morning exercise (Y-Dan exercise) for more than 10 years.

The well-known folk remedy of taking two teaspoonfuls of apple cider vinegar and one teaspoonful of honey daily to strengthen the bones does work. I know this is true through my experience from working with many post-menopausal women.

Hot Flashes

Our experience has showed that the combination of *Chinese Bitters* (taken before breakfast) and *Fem-Mate* (taken at bedtime) is very helpful for alleviating hot flashes. In one case, a 60 year old woman was on HRT for 10 years and was told to stop her HRT immediately because of her vaginal bleeding. When she stopped, her hot flashes became unbearable, and she tried all manner of remedies to no avail. When she took *Chinese Bitters* and *Fem-Mate*, her hot flashes became manageable in only 4 days, although it took 3-4 months before her hot flashes disappeared.

This remedy works because *Chinese Bitters* decongests and cleanses the liver while *Fem-Mate* stimulates natural progesterone and estrogen production by stimulating the adrenals. For some women, whose hot flashes are relatively mild, *Chinese Bitters* alone is enough to eliminate their hot flashes.

In some cases, the complete program of liver and gallbladder cleansing may be necessary because HRT is known to cause gallstones. Daily morning exercises such as stretching and deep breathing (Y-Dan, for example) can also help by "activating" the liver in the morning.

Estrogen dominance

Conventional medicine tries to convince women that menopause is an estrogen deficient disease and estrogen therapy is the answer to the major menopausal women's concerns such as hot flashes, heart attack and osteoporosis. However, I believe menopause is a natural physiological process because high estrogen levels are no longer needed after the child-bearing age. As a matter of fact, the major concern for postmenopausal women should be "estrogen dominance", not estrogen deficiency. The estrogen production does decline to some extent after menopause but progesterone production declines much more because the adrenals are the only producers of progesterone after menopause. Estrogens are produced by adrenals and fat cells. This results in estrogen being dominant and out of control because progesterone has balancing effects on estrogens. "Estrogen dominance" is probably the major cause of perimenopausal or postmenopausal women's cancers in the reproductive tract as well as breast cancer. Use of estrogens is also known to be one of the risk factors for stroke according to the Canadian Medical Association's "Home Medical Encyclopedia" [editor: Peter Morgan, The Readers Digest Association (Canada) Ltd., Montreal, 1992].

In some cases, instead of *Chinese Bitters* and *Fem-Mate* as mentioned in the previous section, *Shou Wu Plus* can work well too.

Shou Wu Plus strengthens and stimulates both the liver and kidneys. *Fem-mate* is more intended for stimulating progesterone production.

The following are quotes from the book *Estrogen in the Environment* (see Reference 1 at the end of this section): "Estrogens might contribute to heart attacks both by clotting abnormalities and by accelerating atherosclerosis via enhanced hepatic synthesis of plasma triglycerides and prebetalipoproteins". "The estrogen may change liver function including the synthesis of critical plasma proteins that influence the cardiovascular system". "An increased risk of cardiovascular disease is still observed in oral contraceptive users".

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5. Endometriosis symptoms, treatment and liver health

Endometriosis is the most common cause of pelvic pain in women of reproductive age. It afflicts millions of women in America. Yet the medical profession has a limited understanding of this disease. Endometriosis occurs when endometrial cells which normally line the uterus somehow grow on other pelvic organs such as the outside of the ovaries, the fallopian tubes, the uterus, etc. The mislocated cells can develop into cysts, scars or adhesions which may lead to infertility. Symptoms may include chronic pelvic pain, severe menstrual pain, painful bowel movements during menstruation, constant fatigue, allergies and infertility. It usually ends with menopause as the estrogen level decreases, but estrogen replacement therapy can reactivate the disease because it raises the estrogen level.

Various medical therapies may temporarily relieve the symptoms of endometriosis by suppressing estrogen level but they often lead to the absence of menstruation and decreased fertility. Surgery is not the answer because endometrial cells grow back in different areas sooner or later unless the root of the problem is addressed. Pregnancy and birth control pills can control the *symptoms temporarily* but are also incapable of eradicating the disease.

My experience with endometriosis

As an endometriosis sufferer for more than 15 years, I hope my experience can help other sufferers. Other than juvenile arthritis which started at the age of 14, hay fever and allergy to dust and pollen, I was never bothered by my period (except feeling fatigue) until my early 30's. I started having pain and experienced fainting with every period. The pain increased over the years. In 1984 I passed out one day during my period in a subway train (fortunately I wasn't driving). The ambulance took me to a hospital where I was examined by a woman doctor. She told me that I had a thick and hard uterine wall for unknown reasons. A gynecologist was then called in. He told me that I had a big fibroid in my uterus and should be checked with ultrasound as soon as possible. The ultrasound "confirmed" the big fibroid. He suggested a hysterectomy immediately but I refused. Half a year later my family moved and I went to see a top gynecologist in Toronto. He told me that my fibroid was actually very small and should cause no concern but that I had endometriosis which was my real problem. When I told him that my big fibroid was confirmed by ultrasound, he simply said "they must have mistaken water for fibroid". Unless the pain became unbearable, he would not advise me to take any medication. I accepted the chronic pain as part of my life and tried to live as normally as I could. During those years constant fatigue and allergies also bothered me, but I did not know that they were all related. As I advanced in years, all the above problems became more severe and new problems continued to appear. By my late 30's, I had problems sleeping, frequent urination, and my skin became dull, grey and yellowish with constant breakouts. In 1989, my thyroid problem started and my fingers sometimes felt numb in the morning.

I decided to see a traditional Chinese doctor. He correctly diagnosed that I had liver congestion by reading my pulse. From my experience working for more than 6 years in the medical laboratory of a large hospital in Toronto, I recognized that unlike liver inflammation or infections which show elevated liver enzyme levels in blood due to enzymes released from ruptured liver cells, liver congestion or weakness cannot be detected in blood tests. This is due to the fact that the liver cells are still intact and therefore do not release liver enzymes into the blood. In fact I had two blood tests done prior to my visit to the Chinese doctor and they were both normal. In general, blood tests will not reveal liver congestion or weakness.

How I overcame endometriosis

Unfortunately Chinese medicine does not understand hormones or endometriosis. As a matter of fact, there is no term for

hormones in Chinese medicine. The Chinese doctor who diagnosed my liver congestion gave me two products for my liver. They contained Don Quei, ginseng, licorice and royal jelly. I was feeling better for about two weeks because they did help my liver and improve my circulation. Then my pain came back worse than ever. I realized that the above herbs have estrogenic activities which took a little while to have an effect on me. I later found out from other peoples' experience that the sicker a person is, the shorter is the time needed to have negative effects from plant estrogens.

Realizing that Chinese medicine does not address hormone problems and conventional medicine does not address liver congestion problems, I decided to start my own journey of self-healing, using my combined knowledge of western science and Chinese medicine. I made some mistakes at the beginning which delayed my recovery. I tried Swedish Bitter which contains fennel, anise, angelica and licorice all of which have estrogenic activities. Again I was feeling better for about 3 weeks before I got into more pain and extreme fatigue. Following a lengthy research into the estrogenic activities in different herbs, I developed my own remedies which help liver functions but without estrogenic activities. I used these remedies in conjunction with regular exercise and diet control. It took me about 7 to 8 months before my symptoms disappeared completely. The regimen that I followed is described below:

1. Take 2 cups of warm water first thing in the morning.
2. Do Y-Dan exercise for about half an hour.
3. Take *Chinese Bitters*. 45 minutes to 1 hour should have passed since taking the water.
4. Have my breakfast about 20 to 30 minutes after taking *Chinese Bitters*.
5. Take *Coptis* at bed time on an empty stomach.
6. Avoid or minimize foods or herbs with estrogenic activities and foods that weaken our organs, especially the liver, kidney and spleen. These foods and herbs are discussed in Section 1 of this webpage.

The warm water taken in the morning is intended to stimulate intestinal movement and activate the kidneys. Morning exercise stimulates blood circulation and reduces estrogen production. It also activates the liver. *Chinese Bitters* helps to cleanse and decongest the liver. *Coptis* is very effective in stimulating bile flow and eliminating excess estrogens since the liver eliminates estrogens through bile and urine. "A Significant route of excretion of estrogens is the bile, and undue accumulation of these hormones may occur in circumstances of a decreased flow of bile or a diminished excretion of estrogens in the bile" [12].

Once the bile is flowing properly, *Coptis* may not be needed any more. It usually takes 1-2 bottles of *Coptis*. Indications of proper bile flow include better quality sleep and normal bowel movements with good bile color in the stool.

I also used Taheebo (a Brazilian tree bark) and vitamin B, C and minerals for liver strengthening. An essentially vegetarian diet with no refined food or deep-fried foods also helped to restore my liver health. Along with the endometriosis pain, every other problem (skin problems, sleep disorder, allergy and overactive thyroid and arthritic pain) was gone. During that year, I noticed that my pain reduced gradually with improvement in my liver and my complexion. When most of my problems disappeared and my complexion improved, I realized how important the liver was to endometriosis.

The importance of diet

During those years of suffering, I found that many foods bothered me during my menstruation even though they didn't seem to cause obvious negative reactions when I was not menstruating. Those foods include tomato, orange, lemon, grapefruit, banana and cold foods cold drinks in general, basically most foods classified by Chinese medicine as "*Yin*". Pain is the result of blood stagnation. According to Chinese medicine, "*Yin*" means inactivity which aggravates blood stagnation and makes pain worse. One day during my menstruation, I did not eat anything and was resting in bed the whole day. I felt weak but no pain. Then I decided to eat some light dinner which consisted of rice, boiled egg and a few slices of tomato. Within an hour, I had the worst cramp in months. I believe it was the tomato that did it because I never had problem with rice or egg before. I found that physical exertion also aggravated my pain. One of my clients had similar experience with tomato. One day during her menstruation, she was feeling fine in the morning while at work. After lunch which consisted of spaghetti with tomato sauce, she had such a bad cramp that she had to go home.

Relationship between endometriosis, estrogen levels and liver health

Studies have shown that chronic exposure to dioxins (TCDD) is directly correlated with an increased incidence in endometriosis in rhesus monkeys [1]. Unfortunately, we all live in an environment contaminated with dioxins (90% of it in fish, meat and dairy products according to a report from the World Health Organization). Why do some women get endometriosis but not others? Apart from genetic factors, the difference may lie in the state of their liver health. The book *Chemical Scythe* [2] states: "the liver is a major target organ for TCDD (2,3,7,8 Tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin) and is severely affected by the chemical"; "TCDD will cause extensive necrosis (tissue decay or death) of the liver in rabbits"; "one of the main toxic effects of TCDD in the rat and

rabbit is damage to the liver". Studies and observations also showed that up to 50% of the nearly 1000 persons who may have had exposure to dioxins since 1949 in industrial accidents have enlarged liver and impairment of liver function [3].

Substantial evidence exists that endometriosis is dependent on estrogen for continued growth and proliferation [4]. Estrogen therapy has been shown to worsen gynecological conditions such as fibroids and endometriosis [5], and to have a pronounced effect upon the endometrium and *induce* endometrial mitosis (hyperplasia) [6]. Research also suggested that regular exercise may help to protect against endometriosis by decreasing the rate of estrogen production [7]. Endometriosis can even occur in men who are castrated and treated with estrogen [8].

Medical therapies for endometriosis try to lower estrogen levels either by suppressing estrogen production or suppressing the serum estrogen level by derivatives of testosterone. A better alternative however is to strengthen the liver so that it can more efficiently inactivate and remove estrogen. The liver regulates estrogen by inactivating it through oxidation and conjugation with sulfate or glucuronide. The conjugated estrogens are excreted mostly in the bile with a small amount excreted in the urine. The fact that hyper-estrogenism accompanies certain types of liver disorders confirms the important role of the liver in estrogen inactivation. "The hyper-estrogenism occurs as a result of failure of hepatic (liver) removal of estrogen from the circulation" [9]. As a matter of fact the symptoms often associated with endometriosis such as chronic fatigue, allergy, emaciation and poor complexion are not caused directly by endometriosis but are signs of liver disorders.

According to Chinese medicine, the liver is the most emotion sensitive organ. It serves important regulatory functions which affect emotional and mental activity. When the liver is affected by stress, it becomes tense and its vitality is repressed, the bowels may become constipated or sleep is disturbed, accompanied by nightmares or insomnia [10].

After I was first diagnosed as having endometriosis in 1984, I came across a publication from the Mayo Clinic which called endometriosis a "career woman's disease" because most women with this disease were career women. It didn't explain the reason so it made me wonder how my body knew that I was a career woman. It is clear to me now that "career woman" simply means "stressed woman". As we all know, "stress" is damaging to every part of our body especially to the liver. In my case, a long period of stress resulted in liver congestion which led to restricted bile and blood flow. The weakened liver was too weak to inactivate and remove my estrogens, resulting in their accumulation.

Other than stress, liver weakness can also be caused by taking too much medication as most of them are damaging to the liver or kidneys, or intakes of toxins such as dioxins from various sources. It may also be caused by eating too many liver weakening foods such as refined flour, refined sugar, deep fried foods, caffeine or ice cold foods or drinks which chill the liver and kidneys especially if the liver is already genetically weak. Overall however, I still think stress is the most common factor because most endometriosis sufferers including myself are over-sensitive emotionally. My stress started from my childhood.

Many endometriosis sufferers take painkillers regularly to control their pain. Since painkillers are damaging to the liver and kidneys, they actually make their problems worse in the long run. I feel lucky that I only took painkillers less than 10 times during my years of suffering. Too many painkillers may make the liver disorder irreversible. My own and other people's experience showed that calcium in an easily assimilable form such as calcium gluconate or calcium ascorbate can be substituted for painkillers. Magnesium oxide is also recommended to be taken to balance calcium.

I was pain-free for almost 5 years (1989 - 1994) except once in early 1994 after taking another Chinese herb, Lycium berries, daily for a few months. My pain albeit mild did come back. When I stopped taking this herb, the pain disappeared. I later found out from the book *Planetary Herbology* [11] that Lycium berries tonifies liver and kidney but also "helps reproductive secretions" which means that the berries probably raised my estrogen level again. This personal experience led me to believe that endometrial cells do not necessarily cause pain unless the estrogen level reaches a certain threshold that make the endometrial cells swell or congest thereby causing pain. Finally at the end of 1994 my long awaited menopause came and a new stage of life began. I am now healthy and energetic. I still watch my diet, do exercises, cleanse and strengthen my liver periodically.

Since *Vitality Magazine* in Toronto published my article entitled "Endometriosis" in its December 1994 issue, many sufferers who read the article contacted me and were willing to try my approach. Among the endometriosis sufferers that I have helped, one of them has been suffering severely for 26 years. She tried practically everything including 10 surgeries, acupuncture, herbs, Danazol and Provera. She told me that my program of liver cleansing and strengthening with Chinese herbs is the first treatment that ever helped her in 26 years. After only a few months of treatment, her ovarian cyst was gone and her pain and feeling of tightness in her abdominal area reduced substantially. She was sleeping much better and only had to get up once to go to the bathroom through the night in the second half of her menstrual cycle. Before the treatment she had to urinate every 15 minutes throughout the day and night. Her heart palpitation disappeared after 8 months of liver cleansing and strengthening. She told me that she is totally convinced that her endometriosis is caused by liver disorder. Otherwise the liver cleansing and strengthening treatment couldn't have helped so many of her problems at the same time. Another sufferer whose problems were not as severe was almost completely out of pain after a few months of treatment.

Among all of the published articles that I have read, endometriosis is still considered to have no known cause or effective medical therapy. There was not a single reference to liver disorders being related to endometriosis. However, my personal experience and

that of others have shown that liver plays a central role in this and many other conditions.

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6. Infertility, Hormone Imbalance and Chinese Herbs

Infertility is a common problem with sufferers of endometriosis or other woman's problems. It has become increasingly common with the use of birth control pills and environmental estrogens in our foods. They often cause hormonal imbalance (excessive estrogens relative to progesterone) and anovulation (failure to ovulate). According to the Canadian Medical Association Home Medical Encyclopedia [editor: Peter Morgan, The Readers Digest Association (Canada) Ltd., Montreal, 1992], "anovulation is the most common cause for female infertility. Failure to ovulate often occurs for no obvious reason. It can be caused by hormone imbalance, stress or a disorder of the ovary such as tumour or cyst".

Infertility and estrogen, progesterone

Other than anovulation, another common cause for female infertility is excessive estrogen. The following quotes are from the book "*Physiology*" [Selkurt, E.E. (editor), *Physiology*, Little, Brown and Company, Boston (1966)]:

"Estrogen administration can lead to failure of implantation of the ovum." (p. 757).

"Estrogens stimulate the smooth muscle of the oviduct to increase the peristaltic action in the direction from the uterus to the ovary. This may be of benefit to sperm transport but if the activity is too great, it prevents the passage of the ovum down the tubes to the uterus" (p.757).

"Progesterone acts on the reproductive tract and mammary gland in such a manner as to prepare the tract for implantation of the fertilized ovum and to maintain gestation and lactation." (p. 758).

"Pregnancy can be established and maintained only if adequate amounts of progesterone are secreted prior to and throughout the course of pregnancy." (p. 765).

It is clear that excessive estrogens and insufficient progesterone play an important role in the failure of implantation of the ovum and maintenance of pregnancy because progesterone secretion is necessary for attachment of the ovum and securing of the fetus to the uterus.

Infertility and liver health

Since the liver is the most important organ for estrogen removal and hormone regulation, liver health is important for fertility. We have observed many cases where the use of the liver cleansing and strengthening product "*Chinese Bitters*" has apparently helped conception. "*Chinese Bitters*" is also helpful in inducing menstruation for women who suffer from amenorrhea (absence of periods).

According to Chinese medicine, *Chinese Gentian* (the main ingredient in *Chinese Bitters*) exerts "downward pressure" in the body. This probably explains why it helps the fertilized ovum to travel down and get implanted in the uterus. However, once

pregnancy starts, the use of *Chinese Bitters* should be stopped as the "downward pressure" may be too strong for the pregnancy. In general, *Chinese Bitters* should be taken only during the first half of the menstrual cycle. Once conception has been ruled out, it may be continued in the second half of the cycle. We have good success in helping conception by the following regimen:

1. Take *Chinese Bitters* (if no conception has taken place) until the period starts;
2. Stop taking *Chinese Bitters* during the period;
3. Start taking *Chinese Bitters* again for 5-6 days, as soon as the period is over, and then stop again (just before ovulation starts);
4. If conception takes place, the use of *Chinese Bitters* is no longer needed. If there is no conception, the period will start again. Then repeat step 3 above.

We have good results with taking *Chinese Bitters* and *Coptis* for at least one whole cycle, then followed by liver and gallbladder flush just before the next period or on the first day of the period. After the period, follow Steps 3 and 4. Many women became pregnant after their first flush. Estrogens are in their highest levels shortly before menstrual bleeding. Liver and gallbladder flush during this time can bring down estrogens significantly.

Surgical intervention may also cause blockage in the oviduct. In this situation, the blockage may be formed by scar formation which is not supported by estrogens and it would be difficult to unblock it.

Dietary sources of estrogens may also play some role in infertility, especially when the liver is already weak. Both dairy products and meat (especially animal fat) have estrogen contents. Pesticide sprays (xenoestrogens) also contribute to our estrogen intakes. In addition, many herbs and foods have estrogenic activities. Some of these herbs and foods are given in Section 4 above. It is advisable for anyone with infertility problems to watch her diet and minimize estrogen intakes.

Success Stories

Case 1

A woman in Toronto who used birth control pills for her dysmenorrhea for 6 years starting at the age of 16 wanted to start a family in her late twenties. She tried for more than one year without success. She found out she was not ovulating by measuring her temperature for 10 months. The first month after she started taking *Chinese Bitters*, she had ovulation (measurable temperature rise) and she became pregnant. She had a second child a couple of years later, again with the help of *Chinese Bitters*. Incidentally she had her gallbladder removed after her first child. She told me that her ovulation and menstruation are still irregular if she does not regularly take *Chinese Bitters* (cleanses the liver; regulates hormones) and *Coptis* (stimulates bile flow).

Case 2

A 34-year old woman in New Jersey who already had a 5-year old girl and had tried for another child for more than one year with the aid of traditional Chinese medicine without success. It did not work because traditional Chinese medicine lacks understanding of hormones. Her situation appears to be hormone-related because she became pregnant the first month after she took *Chinese Bitters*.

Case 3

A 35-year old woman in New Jersey was on fertility drug for more than half a year without success. She became pregnant the first month after she took *Chinese Bitters*. In this case, failure of implantation of the ovum was most likely the cause of her infertility.

Case 4

A woman in North Carolina was told by her doctor that she would never get pregnant because her fallopian tubes were blocked. By reducing her estrogens with *Chinese Bitters* and *Coptis* in addition to daily morning exercise and Taheebo tea, she became pregnant in 3 months. It appears that her fallopian tubes were blocked by estrogen supported growth. When her estrogens were reduced due to more efficient liver, the growth shrank and her tubes were unblocked.

7. Chinese medicine's view of insomnia and depression

I always needed a lot of sleep from the days of my teenage years although I had no problem falling asleep in those days. I had too much sleep but I never felt refreshed. Looking back, I realize that too much sleep and yet never being able to feel refreshed is an early sign of liver and spleen weakness. As the years went by, in my late 30's, I had problems falling asleep and would wake up several times every night. I was told that was part of the aging process.

According to Chinese medicine chronic sleep disorders are usually caused by *Yin-Yang* imbalance resulting from weak liver,

spleen, heart or kidneys. Since these organs affect one another, they all have to be taken care of, especially the heart and the liver. According to Chinese medicine, the liver filters all our blood through the night, especially between 1-3 am. A weak or congested liver means that it has to struggle through the night. Poor quality sleep or even insomnia may result in more severe cases.

With my organs healthier, they are more in harmony. I sleep well now and rarely have to get up at night even though I am over 60. Best of all I feel refreshed in the morning. For people with sleep problems, taking the Chinese herbal tinctures *Chinese Bitters* in the morning and *Coptis* at night has been found to be very helpful in improving the quality of sleep. For some people, taking *Curcuma* at night instead of *Coptis* may be more effective.

A 57-year old man came to see me a few years ago with sleep problem. He took painkillers regularly for 6 years for his pain after a car accident. He woke up every morning at around 2 am. He had no more problem sleeping after cleansing and detoxifying his liver with *Chinese Bitters* and *Coptis* in addition to daily morning exercise.

Depression, a common symptom from stress, is an indication of blocked liver energy according to Chinese medicine. Some prescription drugs such as tranquilizers, sleeping pills, and anti-histamines are known to possibly cause depression because these medications weaken the liver. A Chinese herb, *Curcuma* (*Yu-Jin*), is helpful for depression because it unblocks liver energy. As a matter of fact, *Yu-Jin* means "gold for depression" in Chinese. *Curcuma* is also helpful in stimulating energy circulation and resolving blood clots or bruises. *Curcuma* works better when it is taken in conjunction with *Chinese Bitters* to decongest the liver.

Depression is also common among individuals who have their gallbladders removed or whose gallbladders are loaded with stones. When the gallbladder is loaded with stones, there is limited space or even no space left for bile storage. The bile that is produced in the liver ends up getting congested in the liver causing energy blockage. Anyone without a gallbladder is in the same situation. Bile is forced to stay and become congested in the liver leading to depression.

A good example of how depression can be caused and cured would be a 31-year old man who suffered from depression for years. He took a lot of antibiotics as a child for his tonsilitis (most medications, including antibiotics, tend to weaken the liver). By the time he was in school he was hyperactive and was prescribed Ritalin. At age 25, he became very depressed and was on various anti-depressant medications for 5 years, to no avail. At 31, he started with Chinese Bitters and Curcuma first. When he experienced significant relief in his symptoms in only a few weeks, he decided to do the complete program of liver and gallbladder cleansing. His depression never returned after he cleansed his liver and gallbladder.

There was also a case of a 62 year old woman. She woke up one morning feeling very depressed. She tried Y-Dan exercises and her depression went away. I explained to her that her depression must have been caused by her "blocked liver energy" (to use the Chinese medicine terminology) due to blood retention in her liver. Y-Dan exercises helped her to clear this congestion, improve her general blood circulation, and unblock her liver energy.

According to Chinese medicine, the liver works hard at night to filter the blood. A substantial amount of blood may be retained in the liver upon waking in the morning if the liver is sluggish. Therefore, morning exercises will help get this blood moving and "activate" the liver. It does not have to be any *particular* kind of exercise, so long as it involves a lot of deep breathing and stretching. Y-Dan is an example of a low-impact morning exercise that meets these criteria.

8. Allergies and Arthritis

Allergies

I have suffered from allergies throughout my life. Starting at a very young age, hives and allergies to dust were constant problems. I had sinus problems in my mid-twenties and hay fever both in the fall and spring. I tried allergy shots for many years. They helped but I still had problems breathing during the hay fever season. When my liver became healthy in 1989, all of my allergy problems went away. As we all know, allergy and auto-immune problems (eg, arthritis) are caused by over-active immune systems. They are over-active because they are weak. Our body's natural reaction to weak organs is to make them work harder in order to compensate for the weakness.

Arthritis

I suffered from joint pain from a very young age. At age 14, I was diagnosed with juvenile arthritis. I took some Chinese herbs which only gave me temporary pain relief. At age 29, I was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis and was told by my doctor that nothing could be done except taking aspirin for my pain.

I tried aspirin, but could not continue because of an allergic reaction to the drug. My lips swelled up to double their size. Realizing that the painkillers were only hurting my liver, I made the difficult decision to stop taking them and live with my pain. Looking back, I consider myself lucky in a way that I had this allergic reaction. If there was no reaction, I might have continued taking painkillers for years and done permanent damage to my liver.

According to Chinese medicine, chronic pain is basically the result of "blood stasis". In other words, arthritis is caused by poor blood circulation in the joint. If blood circulation (or the flow of "chi" according to Chinese medicine) is good, then there should be no chronic pain.

There are two ways to improve blood circulation; cleansing the blood and physical exercise. Clean blood from a clean and efficient liver flows more easily, and can carry more oxygen and nutrients to nourish your body's cells. Toxin-loaded blood from a congested liver is thick and sluggish, and does not flow well. It tends to cause problems through stagnation. Physical exercise stimulates blood circulation, and if you do your exercises in the morning, it helps "activate" the liver, ie- get the blood flowing through it.

After more than 30 years of suffering from arthritic pain, at age 47 I finally managed to eliminate the pain when I did a complete program of liver and gallbladder cleansing in addition to daily morning exercise and control of diet. In the Gallbladder Flushing section of this website, I list some of the foods I tried to avoid because they weakened my liver and spleen, under the heading "Control of Diet".

I should mention that my pain did come back once a few years ago when I drank diluted lemon juice in an attempt to cleanse my kidneys. After 6 days of drinking it every morning, my old arthritis pain came back. I stopped drinking the lemon juice right away, and the pain went away the next day.

According to Chinese medicine, the spleen provides energy to the heart. Citrus juices are weakening to the spleen, which in turn weakens the heart. When the heart is not pumping blood strongly, the overall blood circulation naturally gets sluggish and causes blood stagnation.

The liver, spleen, lungs, kidneys and lymph nodes are all important in the body's immune system. When these organs are weak, they may be overworked and become overactive and as a result antibodies may be over-produced which cause the body to react to many harmless substances unnecessarily (allergy) or attack the body's own organs (e.g. lupus), nerves (e.g. multiple sclerosis) or joints (e.g. rheumatoid arthritis).

It seems to me that once these organs are healthy there is no need for them to overwork. Allergies and arthritis may disappear. My own case is an example. When I had badly congested liver, my spleen and lungs were also weak. My allergy problems were severe enough to disrupt my daily activities at times. After these organs were restored to health, I had no more allergy problems. I also know of two older people (both over the age of 60) who managed to relieve their life-long allergy problems after approximately one year's working at strengthening their internal organs with a combination of Chinese herbs such as *astragalus*, *self heal*, *fu-ling* and *dandelion*. These herbs are contained in our *Meta Plus* herbal tincture.

In Chinese medicine, allergies and arthritis are both classified as "Yin" diseases. People with allergies or arthritis should avoid "Yin" foods such as oranges, tomatoes, lemon, grapefruit, banana, cold drinks or cold foods. They all tend to weaken the spleen. Oranges are also known to be mucus-producing and usually aggravate sinus problems. My personal experience did support this belief repeatedly. When I was suffering from arthritis, citrus fruits always made my pain worse. Yin indicates coldness and inactivity. It retards the movement and makes the blood flow stagnant which causes pain. Stagnation of blood flow in the limbs and meridians is usually the origin of pain and aches in the body. When the blood moves better by acupuncture or massage, the aches and pains should subside or disappear. Unfortunately, if the sluggish blood flow is caused by weak organs, the pain may come back sooner or later. Permanent pain relief can only be accomplished with regular daily exercise and after the organs have become healthy.

Emotional factors may affect allergic or arthritic conditions. Nervousness, fatigue, exhaustion, frustrations, disappointment, anxieties or fear may aggravate allergies or arthritis because these emotions weaken the internal organs and immune system. They also constrict the blood vessels, resulting in poor blood circulation. During my years of arthritis suffering, there was no doubt that my problems were related to my stress levels.

9. Other liver-related problems: headaches, diabetes, thyroid disorders, skin problems, mens' prostate problems, hypertension, and high cholesterol

Headaches

It is well known in Chinese medicine that headaches are usually caused by liver or gallbladder problems. If the pain is on the sides of your head (as is the case with migraine headaches), it is caused by liver problems because the liver meridian goes through the sides of your head. If the pain is in your forehead or the base of your skull in the back, it is caused by gallbladder problems because the gallbladder meridian runs through those areas.

A 45 year old woman had migraine headaches for more than 30 years when she came to see me. She tried everything possible without any improvement. After only one successful liver and gallbladder flush, her headaches disappeared completely.

However, on her second day of apple juice fasting, her headaches were so severe that she was not sure if she should continue the program. Fortunately, she did persist and flushed out a large number of stones on the next day even though she had never been diagnosed with gallstones. Her migraine headaches never came back again.

I believe that her severe headaches on the second day of her apple juice fasting were caused by toxins being released too quickly.

Diabetes

According to Chinese medicine, Diabetes is basically caused by a weak liver, spleen, and pancreas. This will cause deficient production of insulin.

It is well known that diet, obesity, food allergies, viral infections, and stress are all contributing factors for diabetes, but my understanding is that these factors either cause or are caused *by* a weak liver, spleen, and pancreas. For example, obesity is the result of poor diet and/or a sluggish liver which causes a sluggish metabolism. A sluggish liver is often associated with gallstones because the liver and gallbladder are interconnected. And gallstones are formed because of "bile stasis" due to a sluggish gallbladder. Fatty liver (a common complication of diabetes) is also an indicator of liver weakness, and chronic diarrhea (yet another common diabetes symptom) is caused by a weak spleen according to Chinese medicine.

Diet and exercise are important for the treatment of diabetes, as western medicine has taught for a long time. Foods that weaken the liver and spleen (as mentioned in the "Gallbladder Flushing" section under the heading "Control of Diet") should be avoided or minimized wherever possible. In their place you should eat cooked whole grains, vegetables, and beans. Daily morning exercises (to "activate" the liver) are necessary as well.

In addition to diet and exercise, liver and gallbladder cleansing is very important. The liver, spleen, and gallbladder are all interconnected, so a weak liver and spleen will tend to be accompanied by a weak gallbladder and vice versa. This explains why diabetics have a very high incidence of gallstones. Once gallstones are formed, the liver, spleen, and pancreas will never be healthy until those stones are eliminated.

Our experiences have shown that the use of Chinese Bitters to decongest and cleanse the liver, in addition to diet control and daily morning exercises, have helped many people deal with diabetes, particularly if they have not yet started taking conventional medications. For diabetics who are already on oral medications such as Metformin or Glucophage, they would have to do the complete program of liver and gallbladder cleansing before their blood sugar levels become normal. Unfortunately, anyone who has been on insulin therapy for a long time will have trouble reversing their diabetes problems because their pancreas has probably become non-functional, and their bodies are now totally dependent upon the insulin.

Thyroid disease and liver health

My thyroid disorder (hyperthyroidism) did not start until 1989, the year that I was told I had badly congested liver. It was another stressful year for me. My choice was either surgery to remove part of my thyroid or taking radioactive iodine to inactivate part of my thyroid. I declined both because they often lead to hypothyroidism. I started taking large amounts of dulse leaf powder (1 heaping tablespoonful every day) to reduce my thyroid activity because high dosages of iodine inhibit thyroid activity even

though small dosages of iodine stimulate thyroid activity. The combination of liver cleansing and high dosages of iodine obviously worked in my case. My thyroid problems disappeared in a few months. I found through my experience helping many people with thyroid problems that almost everyone with thyroid problems has congested liver.

The use of thyroid hormones may produce instant boost of energy, but continuous use may suppress your own thyroid hormone production. A 63-year old woman was on Synthroid for 22 years. Her own production of thyroid hormones stopped completely and thyroid pills eventually did not work for her any more. She could not sleep and could not have bowel movement without enema.

With hypothyroidism, if thyroid hormone therapy has only been taken for a few years, the use of thyroid hormone pills may become unnecessary within a few months of taking small doses of iodine combined with liver cleansing and strengthening. Cruciferous vegetables such as cabbage and cauliflower contain thiocyanate which has thyroid-inhibiting effect should be consumed in moderation or minimized.

A 40-year old woman was on thyroid pills for 3½ years. She felt tired and could not sleep well. After 4-5 months of taking *Chinese Bitters* (before breakfast) and *Shou Wu Plus* (before lunch), doing morning exercise and watching her diet, she did not need thyroid pills any more. However, one year after she took the herbal products, her doctor told her that her thyroid hormone level was still low and tried to convince her to take Synthroid again. She told the doctor that she slept better and had more energy and the number for her thyroid hormone level did not mean anything to her. It took her two years of taking the herbal products before her hormone level was normal and she did not need the herbal products any more.

Shou Wu Plus strengthens and stimulates the liver and kidneys in addition to providing a natural source of iodine. It is very helpful for hypothyroidism. However, for women with "woman's problems" (typically associated with too much estrogens), *Chinese Bitters* in conjunction with seaweed such as dulse leaves is recommended because *Shou Wu Plus* may stimulate estrogen production by stimulating the kidneys and the adrenals. For more information about these herbal tinctures (*Shou Wu Plus* and *Chinese Bitters*), please visit our products page.

Skin problems

I always had poor complexion due to my poor blood circulation. Acne and various skin problems started in my early teens. I assumed that I was born with poor skin. However, I learned in my 20's the correlation between my skin breakouts and menstrual cycles. My skin problems seemed to be worse just before my period when my estrogen level was high. But I did not know what to do with it. I also noticed that deep fried foods and stress aggravated my problems.

The Chinese term for acne is "youth pea". Having acne during teenage is considered normal. When I still had them in my 40's, I knew something was not right and it could not be "youth pea" any more. When I started taking *Chinese Bitters* to decongest and cleanse my liver and *Coptis* to stimulate bile flow, I noticed improvement in my skin condition even though the improvement occurred rather gradually. After I did my first liver and gallbladder flush, my skin condition cleared up completely.

Hormone production increases rapidly during teenage years. Since the liver is the organ that eliminates estrogens and testosterone, a weak liver that fails to handle the increased work load may end up weakening all its functions including blood filtration. The higher than normal toxins and hormones in blood may clog up the hair follicles and sebaceous glands in the skin, causing inflammation which leads to breakouts. If the liver is so weak that blood is never filtered efficiently even though hormone production is not increasing, then the skin problems can occur at any age.

When the liver is congested, foods that cause this congestion should be avoided or minimized. These foods include roasted nuts, spicy foods, deep-fried foods, and even onions.

Skin breakout is a kind of skin inflammation. According to Chinese medicine, inflammations are basically caused by a weak liver and spleen. The spleen provides blood to the liver. A congested liver will limit blood flow from the spleen and can weaken the spleen easily.

Men's prostate problems

Men's prostate enlargement or prostate cancer is similar to woman's breast cyst or breast cancer. These men's problems are caused by excessive testosterone and blood stagnation while many woman's problems are caused by excessive estrogens and blood stagnation. Both testosterone and estrogens are removed by the liver and they are both growth stimulators. When testosterone accumulate due in part to the liver's failure to eliminate them efficiently, the excessive testosterone go to the prostate and may get trapped there if the prostate is stagnant due to sluggish kidneys and bladder. When testosterone are trapped, they stimulate cell division causing prostate enlargement or even prostate cancer. Young and more active men have better blood circulation and more active kidneys and bladder. Their chance of having testosterone trapped in their prostate is much lower.

The prostate is located beside the urinary bladder which is connected to the kidneys. Weak kidneys cause sluggish bladder and prostate and are important contributing factors to prostate problems. According to Chinese medicine, cold drinks and cold foods chill and weaken internal organs especially the spleen and kidneys. I have observed from my experience helping men with prostate problems that the incidence of prostate problems appears to be higher among men who take cold drinks regularly. A 63 year old man who came to see me and wanted to know what to do to prevent prostate problems. Many of his friends suffered from it but not him. When I asked him if he liked cold drinks, he said he always hated cold drinks and he would mix cold drinks from the refrigerator with hot water before he drank it. My advice to him was to keep doing what he did and to cleanse and strengthen his liver which enables it to eliminate testosterone more efficiently.

Hypertension (high blood pressure) and high cholesterol

According to Chinese medicine, hypertension or high blood pressure are usually caused by liver or kidney congestion. Since they are filtration organs, a congested liver or kidneys will restrict blood flow, which causes blood pressure to go up.

Of course, it is well known that cholesterol is a major factor in high blood pressure, but that is also related to a congested liver because cholesterol is metabolized in the liver. A weak liver that fails to metabolize cholesterol efficiently would cause cholesterol to accumulate, which in turn increases blood pressure. A weak liver which tends to overwork may also result in overproduction of cholesterol.

Our Chinese Bitters decongest and cleanse the liver, which has helped many people wean themselves off blood pressure medication. In some cases, the complete program of liver and gallbladder cleansing may be necessary for liver decongestion because the liver is more prone to congestion (and hence, more difficult to cleanse) when gallstones are present.

Our experiences confirm this prediction. We had one case of a 57 year old man who was on blood pressure medication for 5 years. He no longer needed it after cleansing his kidneys and getting rid of the stones. We had another case of a woman in her early 60s who took cholesterol medication for years without success, but experienced a cholesterol drop from 330 to 240 after just one flush.

Stress is a major contributor as well, because it congests the liver according to Chinese medicine. You should try to do daily morning exercises (stretching and deep breathing routines such as Y-Dan) in order to activate your liver, and you should try to minimize foods that congest your liver such as deep fried foods, roasted nuts, and most spicy foods.

I came from a family with high blood pressure problems. My father passed away at the age of 59 from a stroke and most likely arteriosclerosis or atherosclerosis. In my case, Chinese Bitters did help to bring down my blood pressure, but my blood pressure was *still* in the high end of the so-called "normal range". It came down to the middle of the normal range only after I added black sesame to my daily diet. According to Chinese medicine, black sesame seeds cleanse the arteries. A Chinese herb ("Self-Heal") may also be helpful in reducing blood pressure because it relaxes the artery.

Note: if Chinese Bitters (or any other herbal product) are taken in conjunction with blood pressure pills, it is very important that the two be separated by a meal. Otherwise, they might interfere with each other. For example, if you take Chinese Bitters before breakfast, your blood pressure medication should be taken well after breakfast.

If you have to take medication before breakfast, then you should take Chinese Bitters (or any other herbal tincture) before lunch or at bedtime on an empty stomach.

10. Bad breath (halitosis), gum disease, gum surgery, plaque and sensitive teeth

Bacteria play an important role in many dental problems such as bad breath (halitosis), gum disease, plaque and possibly sensitive teeth. Bad breath is generally known to be caused by volatile sulfur compounds such as hydrogen sulfide, methyl mercaptan and dimethyl sulfide. These compounds are produced by bacterial and cellular degradation. Plaque also starts out with a sticky film of live bacteria. If it is not removed at this stage, it starts growing on the sugar and minerals and hardens to become calculus which may lead to gum irritation, gingivitis and eventually to periodontal disease.

Bad breath

In Chinese medicine, halitosis is believed to be caused by "heat" in the liver and stomach. Since the liver is one of the important organs for the immune system, I believe the "heated" liver probably lowers the immune system and leads to bacterial overgrowth.

With my congested liver (which can easily cause "heated" liver), halitosis and painful bleeding gums were my regular problems. People who have their gallbladders removed by surgery or who have gallbladders loaded with gallstones are more prone to liver "heat" because of bile congestion in the liver. Women who have bad breath problem often experience an increase in bad breath shortly before and during menstruation. This is another indication that the liver plays an important role in halitosis. The liver is the organ that eliminates estrogens. Shortly before menstruation, estrogens are at their highest levels in the menstrual cycle. The liver has to work harder to eliminate the extra hormones. As a result, any weakness in the liver would be intensified.

I restored my oral health by improving my liver health, by using a special anti-bacterial mouthwash that I made myself using Chinese herbs, and of course by daily brushing and flossing. The bitter and sour tastes in the mouth that often accompany halitosis is known to be a sign of imbalance in the liver and stomach in Chinese medicine. After using the mouthwash for less than a month, my bleeding gum problem disappeared. I also found that this mouthwash helps prevent plaque formation.

An effective antibacterial mouthwash does control the bad breath because it eliminates the bacteria temporarily. However, the liver "heat" may have to be addressed for lasting effect. In Chinese medicine, the herb *Chinese Gentian* (the main ingredient in one of our herbal products, "*Chinese Bitters*") is known to be effective in "cooling" the liver and removing the "heat". Our experience did show that the combination of our herbal mouthwash to eliminate bacteria and "*Chinese Bitters*" to purge the liver "heat" works well for many bad breath sufferers.

A 45-year old woman who had bad breath for years took *Chinese Bitters* and our herbal mouthwash. After 2 weeks, her bad breath improved significantly. When she did liver and gallbladder flushes a few months later, a fair amount of stones was flushed out. Her bad breath eventually disappeared.

For some people, liver and gallbladder flush after taking *Chinese Bitters* may be necessary to purge the liver "heat" because apple juice fasting is very effective in cleansing out stagnant bile in the liver. Gallbladder cleansing helps to decongest the liver because bile can be stored in the gallbladder again.

Gum disease, gum surgery, gingivitis or gum inflammation

Gum disease is another condition from bacterial overgrowth. Other than poor oral hygiene, chronic gum disease may be an indication of poor general health or weak immune system which allows bacteria to thrive.

"Heat" in the liver and stomach also aggravates the problem according to Chinese medicine. This probably explains why pregnant women are more susceptible to painful inflamed gums because they are more prone to "heated" liver due to the over-working liver. Eating too much spicy foods may also cause liver "heat".

Other than pregnancy, birth control pills, smoking, alcohol, many medications and impaired immunity such as diabetes and AIDS are all known risk factors for gum disease because they all cause congested and "heated" liver.

From extensive user experience, the anti-bacterial mouthwash mentioned above has been found to be excellent for gum disease or gum inflammation. Many users were pleased to find that their gum surgery was not necessary any more after using only a few bottles our herbal mouthwash. However, treating "liver heat" may sometimes be necessary.

A 53-year old man had to have many of his teeth pulled after years of neglect. After the first 2 teeth had been pulled out, the underlying gums became very swollen and painful. He did not like to take any antibiotic or painkiller. After using our herbal mouthwash several times a day for 2 days, the pain stopped. He then reduced usage to once a day just before bedtime. One week later, he went back to the dentist to have 2 more teeth extracted. The dentist was amazed at how quickly his gums healed, and told him that he had never seen gums heal so fast. He had 6 more teeth extracted over the next 3 weeks, also without problems.

Our Chinese Herbal Mouthwash has proven to be exceptionally effective in reducing pain following tooth extraction or gum surgery. Many users found that by using this mouthwash, they do not need painkiller or antibiotics.

Sensitive teeth

The observation that sensitive teeth often start after dental treatment makes me suspect that bacteria may play some role in it because bacteria somehow may be introduced during the dental treatment. A Finnish Dental Society paper stated that hypersensitivity may sometimes persist despite effective blocking of the tubules and that this may indicate that some other mechanisms may operate in the nerve activation instead of, or in addition to the hydrodynamic one. Inflammation may sensitize the nerve endings to such an extent that smaller fluid shifts would be sufficient for nerve activation. The paper suggested that bacterial invasion of dentin may be one of the causes of hypersensitivity and sensitive teeth may also develop as a result of inflammation induced sensitization of the nerves in the pulp-dentin border in teeth with open tubules (Narhi, M., et al., Proceedings of the Finnish Dental Society, 88 Suppl 1: 15-22, 1992). In an article entitled "Mechanisms of Dentin Sensitivity" in the monograph *Tooth Hypersensitivity* (The Dental Clinics of North America, Volume 34, No. 3, July 1990), Dr. David H.

Pashley stated: "No discussion of the mechanisms involved in the development and maintenance of dentin sensitivity would be complete without a discussion of the relative role of bacteria and their products on dentin sensitivity.....The open dentinal tubules associated with sensitivity invite penetration of bacteria".

I had a sensitive tooth (sensitive to cold and heat) for 6 years and was told by my dentist to live with it. In 1994, the sensitive tooth became very painful. I used the anti-bacterial Chinese herbal mouthwash mentioned above. A week later, my toothache went away. Unexpectedly, my tooth sensitivity also disappeared. I went to my dentist and told him I believe my sensitive teeth appeared to be bacteria related. He dismissed my idea and insisted that sensitive teeth are caused by exposed nerves and has nothing at all to do with bacteria. It seems to me that the exposed nerves may be due to inflammation caused by bacteria. When I had my mercury fillings removed from 5 teeth in 1998, those teeth became very sensitive. It took me more than a month to get over the sensitivity with daily use of the herbal mouthwash.

The chief ingredient of this mouthwash, *Saussurea*, is anti-bacterial and also helps energy flow according to traditional Chinese medicine. Herbs generally have different anti-bacterial actions than chemicals. Antibiotics or chemicals kill bacteria including normal "friendly" bacteria. Herbs simply create an environment unfavourable for bacterial survival. Since the normal bacteria require different environment than pathogenic bacteria, they are not affected by herbs.

A 72-year old woman had two sensitive teeth for more than 10 years and was told by her dentist that the only thing he could do for her was to remove them and re-do her denture. After using our anti-bacterial mouthwash preparation for about a month, her tooth sensitivity disappeared. Other people who had teeth sensitive to cold and heat also had similar favourable experience with the mouthwash. However, sensitivity to acid (e.g. from eating citrus fruits) may involve different mechanisms.

A 43-year old man had a sensitive tooth that bothered him for years. He found only temporary relief with Sensodyne, which he used daily for four years. If he stopped using it even for a few days, his pain would return. When he tried our mouthwash, he was very pleased to find out that his sensitivity completely disappeared after only using half of the bottle! Three years later, his problems have *still* not returned even though he never had to buy another bottle after the first one.

This mouthwash also helps many skin problems. It has been found from experience that acnes, rashes, boil, minor cuts and insect bites may be effectively alleviated by applying the mouthwash externally to the affected skin area two to three times daily. It seems that the anti-bacterial and anti-inflammatory properties of the mouthwash also work on skin problems.

Our mouthwash contains no saccharin, sweetener or colouring. Unlike other mouthwashes available from drug stores, it does not taste good but it works!

Note: All material provided here is for educational purposes only. Consult your own physician or dentist regarding the applicability of any opinions or recommendations to your specific problem or condition.