

What is Liver Qi Stagnation and What Can I do About it?

Liver Qi stagnation is when the energy or Qi of the liver system does not flow as easily and freely as it should. Liver Qi is largely responsible for the movement of Qi through the entire body and the free flow of blood which provides fluids and nourishment. Liver Qi can become blocked or slowed down as a result of anxiety or stress, as well as certain foods in the diet. When this happens, different symptoms can occur.



Symptoms of Liver Qi Stagnation Can Include:

*pain along the ribs *fullness in the upper abdomen *irritability *moodiness *depression *anger *PMS *muscular pain *finger/toenail problems *breast distention or tenderness *irregular periods *sighing *bitter taste in mouth *feeling of a lump in the throat *stomach ache

Activities that can help:

Exercise such as walking, running, swimming, dancing, jumping, biking
Tai Chi or Qi Gong
Time spent outdoors
Creative pursuits that you enjoy
Meditation and deep breathing
Focusing on what you are grateful for



Food Can be Used to Treat or Prevent Liver Qi Stagnation

Certain foods, spices, and herbs can move liver Qi and help resolve stagnation. Many helpful foods are pungent (have a strong taste or smell). Foods to be included in your diet as tolerated include:

Pungent anti-stagnation foods:

watercress
onions
turmeric
basil
bayleaf
cardamom
marjoram
cumin
fennel
dill
black pepper
rosemary
lemon balm
mint
mustard greens

Non-pungent anti-stagnation foods:

beets
taro root
strawberry
chestnut
pinenuts
cherries
cabbage
turnips
cauliflower
broccloi
brussel sprouts
kohlrabi
sweet rice
peach

Bitter or Sour Foods to Reduce Excess of the

Liver

rye
romaine lettuce
asperagus
radish leaves
citrus peel
dandelion root
milk thistle seeds
chamomile flowers
quinoa
lemon /lime /grapefruit

Things to Reduce or Avoid

*Hydrogenated and poor quality fats such as margarine, canola oil, shortening, and rancid oils or oils that have been used multiple times to fry foods can cause inflammation and may cause extra work for your liver.

*Excess nuts and seeds. (Small amounts such as 1/4 to 1/2 cup can be healthy)

*Harmful chemicals in food, water, and personal care products. See Environmental Working Group for lists of chemicals to avoid, foods that are best if organic, and for information on many personal care products.

*Drugs. This includes some illegal drugs, a number of over the counter medications, and some prescription drugs which have the potential to cause liver damage. Don't stop any of your prescription drugs unless cancelled to do so by your prescribing physician.

*Alcohol- processed in the liver, it can be harmful to liver cells, especially if taken in excess.

*Sugar and dairy and highly processed and refined foods

Foods That Detox and Cool

celery
mung beans
seaweed
cucumber
rhubarb root
tofu
millet
mushrooms
radish

Foods That Harmonize the Liver

honey
apple cider vinegar

Refreshing Liver Harmonizing Cooler

Combine one TBSP of unrefined apple cider vinegar and one TBSP of raw local honey with one cup of filtered water, mix well, add an ice cube and enjoy.



Herbal Preparations

There are many herbal formulas that may be used to help soothe the liver and move Qi. Take your herbal formulas as directed by your Chinese Medicine practitioner.

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