

Patient Help Sheet

Improving Digestive Function

Here are some tips that you can use to help balance and support your health during this time. Please feel free to call me if you have further questions or concerns.

"The first wealth is health." Ralph Waldo Emerson

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Acupressure Points

Rubbing these acupressure points with your fingers for 30 to 60 seconds can help improve digestive function over time.

ST 36

Stomach 36 (ST 36): On the front of the lower leg, about 1 finger-width lateral to the crest of the shin bone, and about 4 finger-widths below the indentations of the knee.

Functions: Tonifies the Qi and the blood, harmonizes the spleen and stomach, boosts energy levels and normalizes digestive function. Good for all chronic digestive problems, as well as acute watery diarrhea, stomach gurgling and burping.

LI 11

Large Intestine 11 (LI 11): On the lateral elbow, halfway between the bony prominence on the lateral side of the elbow and the tendons in the middle of the elbow crease.

Functions: Clears heat from the digestive tract and the whole body, treats the intestines, regulates Qi and Blood. Good for constipation, diseases of the intestines, acute GI upset with strong-smelling stools, and GI upset with fever.

PC 6

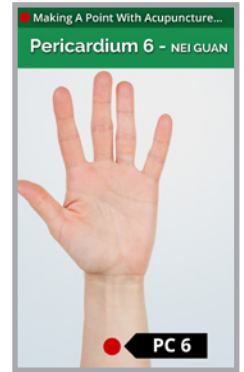
Pericardium 6 (PC 6): On the inside of the wrist, 2 finger-widths up from the wrist crease, in between the two prominent tendons of the inner arm.

Functions: Soothes stuck Qi, harmonizes the stomach, opens the chest, calms the spirit. Good for nausea, vomiting, stomach pain and GI distress made worse with stress.

Dietary Recommendations

Maintaining a proper diet is essential to establishing healthy digestive function. Below are a few tips from Traditional Chinese Medicine as to what a healthy diet entails.

- Eat well-cooked, warm temperature foods. The digestive system is weakened by the introduction of cold or raw foods, so stick to cooked vegetables, grains and meats whenever possible - this makes it easier for your system to adequately digest, and avoids many kinds of digestive upset.
- Avoid drinking ice water, which shocks the digestive system. Instead, drink room temperature water. Avoid gulping or chugging the water, but rather sip consistently throughout the day.
- In general, seek a balanced diet throughout the day - some protein (vegetable or lean animal), grains and vegetables at each meal.
- Avoid foods that are fried, greasy or contain a lot of preservatives.
- Healthy foods are foods with strong Qi themselves - whenever possible, eat locally-sourced, fresh, organic fruits and vegetables.



- Limit the amount of dairy consumed, as dairy is also hard on the digestive system (and can be a trigger for many people for digestive upset.)
- If unable to eat a well-cooked or warm meal, consider pairing your meal with a cup of ginger tea - this mitigates the cold nature of the meal, and assists your stomach in digesting the meal.

Lifestyle Recommendations

Digestion is a dynamic action, so it requires movement. Maintain a regular exercise schedule to keep your digestive Qi moving as it should!

Focus on your food. Avoid eating on the go - in your car, in traffic or at your desk at work. Take the time to focus on your meal and to be free from distractions while eating. Distractions knot the Qi of the digestive system and make it hard for the system to function optimally.

Chew thoroughly. Chewing actually starts the digestive process, so be sure to chew adequately and completely to get all the necessary nutrients from your food.

Maintain a regular eating schedule, and don't eat too late at night.

De-stress. One of the acupuncture systems most susceptible to stress tends to overact on the digestive function when there is a high level of stress, causing GI upset. Incorporate some stress-relieving techniques like meditation, yoga, Tai Chi or journaling into your day.