

Acupuncture and Crohn's Disease



Crohn's disease is an autoimmune disease that affects nearly 780,000 Americans. People with Crohn's disease can experience periods of severe symptoms followed by periods of what seems like remission. This seesaw effect can happen indefinitely, as there is currently no known cure for Crohn's disease. Crohn's disease was discovered in 1932 by Dr. Burrill Bernard Crohn. But it wasn't until recently, in the past 20 to 30 years, that Crohn's disease started becoming extremely prevalent. While there is a genetic component to any autoimmune disease, this does not mean a person will get it just because their parents had it.

Crohn's disease is characterized by chronic diarrhea that is often bloody, weight loss, fever, abdominal pain and tenderness, rectal bleeding, fatigue, poor appetite, anemia, malnutrition and chronic abdominal bloating. The gastrointestinal tract is very sensitive and it is also the basis of the body's immune system. Research is showing the gut plays a much more vital role in human immunity than once thought. The bacteria within the gut are beneficial and help with everything from digestion to the quality of our skin. But when the immune system attacks these beneficial bacteria, it can throw everything off. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) can help those who suffer from Crohn's disease.

TCM generally classifies Crohn's into one of four different categories: damp-heat in the large intestine, spleen weakness, spleen and kidney weakness or Qi and blood stagnation. Qi (pronounced "chee") is the vital energy present in everyone. When Qi is weak, blocked or depleted, illness and disease can arise in the body. The four categories that Crohn's fits into are all examples of how the Qi is not balanced in

the specific energetic meridians running throughout the body.

Damp-heat in the large intestine is usually an acute situation. There may be a sudden onset of gastrointestinal symptoms. Spleen weakness or spleen and kidney weakness are generally due to constitutional deficiencies and they can be chronic in nature. Qi and blood stagnation may appear to be an acute situation due to the severe abdominal pain, but many times these types of blockages have been present for quite some time.

Diet is the single most important element to keeping this disease in check. Excessive intake of cold, raw foods can injure the spleen and stomach energetic meridians, which transform and process foods. The energetic properties of the foods we ingest should always be considered and remain balanced for proper digestion.

Acupuncture and TCM can greatly improve the quality of life for those who suffer from Crohn's disease. Because acupuncture works with the body to balance energy, remove blockages and assist the flow of blood, it can be a wonderful weapon in the fight against Crohn's. Other modalities of TCM like herbal formulas and moxibustion may also be valuable tools to utilize depending on the situation. Moxibustion can help warm the abdomen and the meridians when there are deficiencies such as spleen weakness. Herbal formulas may help remove blockages or drain damp heat. When these methods are combined with proper diet, the chances of recovery and possibly reversal of the disease increase greatly.

Homemade Yogurt Recipe

Ingredients

- 1/3 cup of plain organic Greek Yogurt
- Half gallon of organic milk (your choice of percent)

Recipe

Heat the milk in a pot on the stove until the temperature reaches 205-210 F (just before it begins to boil). Remove pot from the element and let milk rest and cool until it is warm to the touch.

Add the Greek Yogurt and mix it thoroughly into the warm milk. Cover the mixture and place in oven with just the oven light on. Do not turn on the oven, the oven light will provide a consistent temperature. Let the mixture rest for 8 to 12 hours. The longer the mixture rests, the more tart your yogurt will taste.

After 8 to 12 hours remove from oven and stir for consistency; the yogurt should be have a thick consistency.

If you prefer a thicker Greek-style yogurt you can strain the yogurt through a colander lined with cheesecloth. Reserve some liquid whey and stir in if yogurt becomes too thick. Discard remaining unused liquid whey. For a thinner yogurt, serve immediately after it is chilled in the fridge.

Consider adding organic strawberries, blueberries, peaches or other fruit you enjoy to increase the flavor of your fresh, homemade yogurt. Enjoy!



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