

Herbal Explorations

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TCM JOURNEYS – DR. BING YIN LEE

Why Did You Become Involved With TCM? When I was a child, I was very sick and after exhausting all possible avenues, my father went to Jing'an Temple and made a promise to Guan Yin that if I were cured by a Zhong Yi Shi (a doctor that practices zhong yao (Chinese Medicine) that he would dedicate my life to zhong yao. I really am fortunate because I was able to honor my father's vow and also do something that I extremely enjoy, helping people. So, medicine was a natural fit for me.

What Is In Your Cupboard? Shi Quan Da Bu, Gan Mai Da Zao, Ba Zhen Bu Zhong Yi Qi and of course a lot of ginseng soup, but I keep that in the refrigerator.

What Are Your Hobbies? Besides TCM, I used to be an avid shopper, but now I like to go to Dim Sum, travel, and spend time with my old friends. Would you like to go to Dim Sum? Treasure your friends.

What Is Your Favorite Place? Being a city girl, my favorite places are cosmopolitan cities such as Shanghai, Paris, and New York City. But really, now a days, the best place is where family and friends fill the air with laughter and conversation.

Are There Any Tidbits of Herbal Wisdom That You Want To Share? Don't fall in love with any particular formula or herb, you must focus on the patient and what he needs. Address the pattern particular to that person.

What Are Your Thoughts On The Future Of TCM? The future of Traditional Chinese Medicine is bright because in today's mass-market society, it provides personalized health solutions that are tailored to the specific individual's needs. 🍵



Addressing Dysmenorrhea

by Maria Yung, LAc

Dysmenorrhea is painful cramps in the lower abdomen just before or during menstruation. Although minor pain is normal during menstruation, excess pain is not. This condition is a very common problem amongst young women in their early 20's-30's. Approximately 50% of menstruating women have dysmenorrhea. Dysmenorrhea is characterized by spasmodic pain with or without radiating pain to the vagina, anus and lower back. It is often accompanied with low back pain, frequent urination, or a feeling of defecation. For about 10% of the women with dysmenorrhea, the pain is so severe that they are debilitated for three or more days. If not treated, dysmenorrhea can develop into more serious conditions which may affect the patient's physical, mental and emotional health.

In Chinese medicine, to treat dysmenorrhea, it is important to always remember to find the root cause. According to Zhan, e deficiency or excess symptoms when the patient is not menstruating.

In treating dysmenorrhea, we always want to treat the acute symptoms first. Once those symptoms are relieved, then we can treat the root cause. For example, abdominal cramps during menstruation is an acute symptom. The patient's physical condition is the underlying root cause. When the patient is menstruating, we treat the acute symptoms and afterwards, we treat the underlying problem and prevent the recurrence of pain in the next cycle.

GENERALLY SPEAKING, THERE ARE FOUR TYPICAL PATTERNS:

Qi Stagnation and Blood Stasis: Qi stagnation usually results from mental depression, excessive worrying, or too many obsessive thoughts, all of which can impede the normal flow of qi and blood. Qi stagnation causes sluggishness in blood circulation which can

A Caring Approach = Financial Success

by Tara Anderson, LAc, M.S.

How the public and your patients perceive your practice is exceptionally important. Because first impressions are lasting; when a patient walks through the door the first time, it is extremely important that the experience be a positive one. Your reception area should be warm, inviting, and clean. Greeting your patients, both new and returning, when they walk in the door with-in 3 seconds is vital. The greeting needs to be sincere and offered with a smile. These simple, effective, steps will comfort your new patients and assure them that they are genuinely welcome in a potentially unfamiliar environment.

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Prenatal Yoga – Stretches For Back Pain

By Emeka Olumba

Pregnancy is a unique and wonderful time in a woman's life and back pain is a common experience that can occur. I taught my students several safe, relaxing, prenatal yoga poses during their pregnancies to help alleviate their back pain. Some women may require a more individualized routine. If you are pregnant and experience back pain, you should first consult your doctor on the type of exercise appropriate for you.

THE CAUSES OF BACK PAIN DURING PREGNANCY

Your baby growing in the uterus and the associated weight gain pulls your lower body forward. To counter balance this forward pull, the upper part of your torso and shoulders naturally tilt back. This change in physical posture, and center of gravity, puts constant tension on your lower back. Tight hamstrings can also put added strain on your back muscles and spine during your pregnancy.

HAMSTRING STRETCH

Start by sitting on the floor with your back against a wall, your legs extending forward in front of you and your toes pointing upwards toward the ceiling.

Bend your right leg and place the bottom of your right-foot against your inner left thigh. Take a slow breath in and gently lean forward as you breathe out. If possible, hold on to your left foot. If you cannot reach your left foot, hold onto your ankle or wrap a belt around your left foot and hold onto the belt. You should feel the stretch mostly in your hamstrings.

While you are in this position, be still, take calm, gentle breaths.

Hold this position for 10-15 seconds then gently let go of your left foot or the belt and slowly sit up. Repeat this stretch with your other leg. Stretch both legs again, this time holding it for 15-30 seconds on each side.

BACK STRETCH: CAT AND DOG TILT

Kneel on your hands and knees, keeping your arms shoulder-width apart and your knees hip-width apart. Your arms should be straight and relaxed; keep your elbows soft, not locked.

Slowly breathe in and out, keeping your breath steady. As you breathe in, slowly arch your back upwards; tuck your buttocks under your spine, and gradually allow your head to hang.

As you breathe out, slowly arch your back downwards; tilt your buttocks up, and lift your head up.

Repeat each pose 5 to 7 times. Take a break in between poses for 3 to 5 seconds. Each time you repeat, hold each pose for 4 to 5 seconds remembering to breathe.

THE OPEN TWIST

Sit comfortably on the floor with your legs crossed; keep your back straight, opening the chest by pressing the shoulders back and down.

It is important to remember to keep your baby safe and comfortable in the womb by avoiding deep twists, which compress the belly. Avoiding deep twists is simple; do not extend your arm across your belly. This causes the deeper twist that will compress your belly.

Place your left hand on top of your left knee and your right-hand on the floor beside your right thigh. Take a breath in, and as you breathe out, gently twist to the right turning your torso, and your head to the right without forcing the twist. Hold the twist gently for 5 to 7 seconds remembering to breathe deeply and gently during the stretch.

Now, twist in the opposite direction. Place your right-hand on your right knee and your left-hand beside your left thigh. Take a breath in, and as you breathe out, gently twist to the right turning your torso, and your head to the right without forcing the twist. Hold the twist gently for 5 to 7 seconds remembering to breathe deeply and gently during the stretch.

STAFF POSE AGAINST A WALL

Sit comfortably on the floor with your back resting against a wall and your legs extended in front of you. Place a small comfortable pillow between the wall and your lower back.

With your eyes closed, take deep gentle breaths and hold this position for 5-7 minutes.

FINAL NOTES

Try to avoid sitting or standing for long periods; these positions will cause back pain especially during the latter part of your pregnancy. Always practice Yoga in a peaceful environment and wear clothes that are soft and comfortable. 🌸



A Brief Overview of the Lotus

by Wilson Lau

Lian (Nelumbo Nucifera) commonly known as Lotus in the United States, is an amazing aquatic perennial native to a large area spanning from modern Vietnam to Afghanistan. In Chinese culture, its uses range from religious symbolism to tasty foods.

The Chinese have long known of the healthy benefits of the many different parts of this plant. According to Chinese Medical Herbaology and Pharmacology, "the lotus and its various parts are among the most versatile herbs in Chinese herbal medicine. Every part of the plant has separate and distinct properties." The most widely used parts of the lotus in Chinese Medicine are lian zi (lotus seed), lian fang, (lotus root receptacle) and lian ye (lotus leaf).

Texts on Chinese Medicine as far as the Divine Husbandman's Classic of the Materia Medica, state lotus seed "primarily tonifies the middle, nourishes the spirit, augments the power of the qi..." Its key characteristics according to the Chinese Herbal Medicine: Materia Medica are that it "tonifies and stabilizes the spleen, heart, and kidneys; calms the spirit."

Zhong Zi Wan is another popular formula lian zi is used in. Most people know it by the name Fu Ke Zhong Zi Wan used primarily to aid fertility in women by warming the uterus and strengthening the kidney yang. Zhong Zi Wan, is a variation of Fu Ke Zhong Zi Wan primary is Zhong Zi Wan has lian zi to augment the power of the qi, while helping to tonify and stabilize the kidneys.

This wondrous plant of many uses has many unique properties in addition to being a powerful herb in Chinese Medicine. Its seeds are able

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to germinate after being dormant for over a millennium. Scientists believe this is due to a special enzyme, L-isoaspartyl found in its seed. This enzyme allows the lotus seed to repair damage to proteins within its cell. Another interesting fact about the lotus is the “lotus effect” – a natural cleaning ability unique to the lotus plant. The surface structure of the leaf allows drops of water to roll off taking dirt and insects with it leaving the leaf clean and dry at all times. Most incredible is that each part of the lotus plant has a use: the flower, the rhizome, the leaves, the stems, the seeds, the heart of the lotus seed, the root, and that is just a few of its uses!

This article only touches on a few of the many parts and uses of the lotus plant. If you wish to explore this wondrous plant and its many uses in greater depth, you can do so by using the informative texts mentioned in this article. 🌸

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Recipes for the Lotus Root



We found many ways to cook and enjoy the lotus plant.

It is hard to pick just a few recipes because nearly all parts of the lotus are used in Chinese cuisine and Chinese medicine; roots (lian ou), stems (he geng), leaves (ye he), and seeds (lian zi).

The most commonly used part of this plant is the root. The root of the lotus plant is about 8 inches long, and about two inches in diameter. On the outside, the skin is smooth and light brown in color, on the inside, several large air pockets run the length of the tuber for buoyancy in the water. When sliced in half, the root resembles a wagon wheel because of these large air pockets.

Cooked or raw there are many ways of eating the lotus root, and it's excellent for your health. In addition to main dishes can also make soups and desserts out of the lotus root. We have included some of our favorite recipes to help you incorporate lotus root into your diet. If you have a tasty recipe for lotus root please send it to us at recipes@nuherbs.com.

Lotus Root With Snow Peas

This recipe is great for vegetarians; it is very easy to prepare and can be served hot or cold.

8 oz. Lotus root (thinly sliced)	4 oz. Snow peas
4 oz. Celery (sliced)	4 oz. Mushroom (sliced)
1 cup Broth or Water	2 cloves Crushed Garlic
2 tablespoons Cooking oil	Salt to taste

Heat the oil in the frying pan until hot, and sauté the crushed garlic until fragrant. Then pour all the ingredients in the pan and add the water or broth. Sprinkle with salt & cover for 2 minutes until cooked. Do not overcook!

Serves 2 to 4 people.

***Try adding chicken, beef, pork, fish fillets, or prawns into this dish. Stir-fry the seasoned meat or seafood with 1 teaspoon of oil and some crushed garlic until cooked. Stir in the lotus root with snow peas, serve and enjoy.*

Lotus Root Pancakes

Kids and adults love this easy yummy recipe.

1 cup Lotus Root (finely grated, do not drain the juice)	
2 oz. Chinese Sausage, finely chopped *optional	
1 oz. Chinese Mushrooms, soaked & finely chopped	
2 oz. Ground Pork	1 Tablespoon Cilantro, chopped *optional
½ teaspoon Salt	½ teaspoon Sugar
¼ cup Cooking Oil (for cooking in the pan)	

Mix ingredients well until they hold together. Using approximately 2 tablespoons of the mix; use your hands to make small patties. Heat the oil in the pan and put the patties in one by one. Fry on medium heat until crispy & cooked. Be careful not to burn yourself or the pancakes!

Serves 2 to 3 people

Lotus Drink

This refreshing drink is good all year round.

½ cup cubed Lotus Root	1 slice Lime, with peel
½ cup Water	Honey to taste *optional

Blend ingredients in a blender or juicer until mixed well.

Serves 1 person



First impressions include how you and your staff are dressed. An Acupuncturist needs to convey a professional look and be dressed in a lab coat or a suit coat. Your staff should wear either “medical scrubs” or a button up shirt with dress slacks.

When staff or an Acupuncturist is taking a patient's medical history it is very important to listen to the patient. Take the time to listen carefully, and always use a professional bedside manner. After the initial medical intake is complete, outline to your patient how many treatments that you anticipate they will need. Discussing excessive technical detail about the TCM diagnosis is not always reassuring to your patient, most of your patients will not understand TCM terminology. To help my patients understand what to expect from their treatments I give all my patients the Acupuncture Answer Book. I also suggest they pass it onto their friends after they read it.

When the patient's treatment is completed, ask them how they feel and then make recommendations on what herbs will enhance their treatment plan. When scheduling their next appointment, put their next appointment on the back of your professionally designed business card.

In my practice, following the patient's initial visit I always send a Thank You card. I want the patient to know that I do really care about them and by taking the time to personally send them, a Thank You note reinforces this. Patients do pickup on when someone cares about their health condition. My patients are my best advertisements. Many of my patients come in because they have not gotten their health condition solved elsewhere. Therefore giving the “listening ear” and then finishing their treatment with some “tui na” adds the special touch. My patients tell me that the tui na is their favorite part of the treatment.

Treat each of your patients as if they were your only patient. Simply work on how well you treat your patients and the number of patients coming through your door will take care of itself. While people may remember you for you getting their medical problem treated, they will certainly remember how well you treated them as a person. 🍵

cause blood stasis. The pain usually occurs before and during the period and is accompanied with bloating in the lower abdomen. The period is scanty, with purplish clumps. Usually the pulse is wiry and the tongue purple.

Gui Zhi Fu Ling Wan or Xue Fu Zhu Yu Wan are both good formulas to use as they activate blood, remove stasis, regulate Qi and relieve pain. If the bloating is severe, adding Qing Pi or Xiang Fu will be useful.

Damp Cold Stagnation: Patients with this condition have usually sustained cold injury to their lower jiao and the coldness is retained in the uterus. These patients may be careless with their diet during their cycle and drink too many cold beverages or eat too many cold foods. Bathing or swimming in cold water or living in a wet damp environment can also introduce cold damp evil into the body. Patients with this pattern usually suffer pain in the lower abdomen with aversion to coldness during the period. With more severe cases, the pain can radiate to the back. The symptoms are usually relieved by warm compress. The tongue is greasy and the pulse is wiry and deep.

Wen Jing Tang or Xiao Fu Zhu Yu Tang can be used to disperse the blood stasis and warm the channels.

Damp Heat Stagnation This condition develops from consuming excessive amounts of rich, fatty, spicy and sweet foods. Patients with this condition usually have bitterness in the mouth, fullness in the intercostal region, scanty dark urine, and thick odorous vaginal

discharge during menses. During the period, the patient will have stabbing pain in the lower abdomen which is worse with pressure and heat.

Long Dan Xie Gan Tang can be used to treat this pattern as it eliminates damp heat.

Qi and Blood Deficiency Patients with this pattern were either born with a weak constitution or has had a serious illness. With both qi and blood deficiency, blood circulation is sluggish causing blood stasis and pain. Usually the pain in the lower abdomen develops at the end of the menstrual period or after the period is over. The pain is usually relieved with pressure. Patients with this pattern have light and thin bleeding during their period, sallow complexion and often fatigued. Their tongue is pale with a thin white coat, with a thin weak pulse.

Ba Zhen Wan can be used to replenish blood and qi.

CONCLUSION

Although these are the most typical patterns associated with Dysmenorrhea, these are not the only possible patterns. It is important to heed Dr. Bing Yin Lee's advice to focus on the person and find the root cause for the individual patient. Do not pigeon hole her into one of these four patterns.

It is essential to focus on the acute symptoms first and then the root cause. Patients must see results for their acute symptoms, or you may never get a chance to address the root cause. 🍵

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- Bu Nao Wan
- Dang Gui Si Ni Wan
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